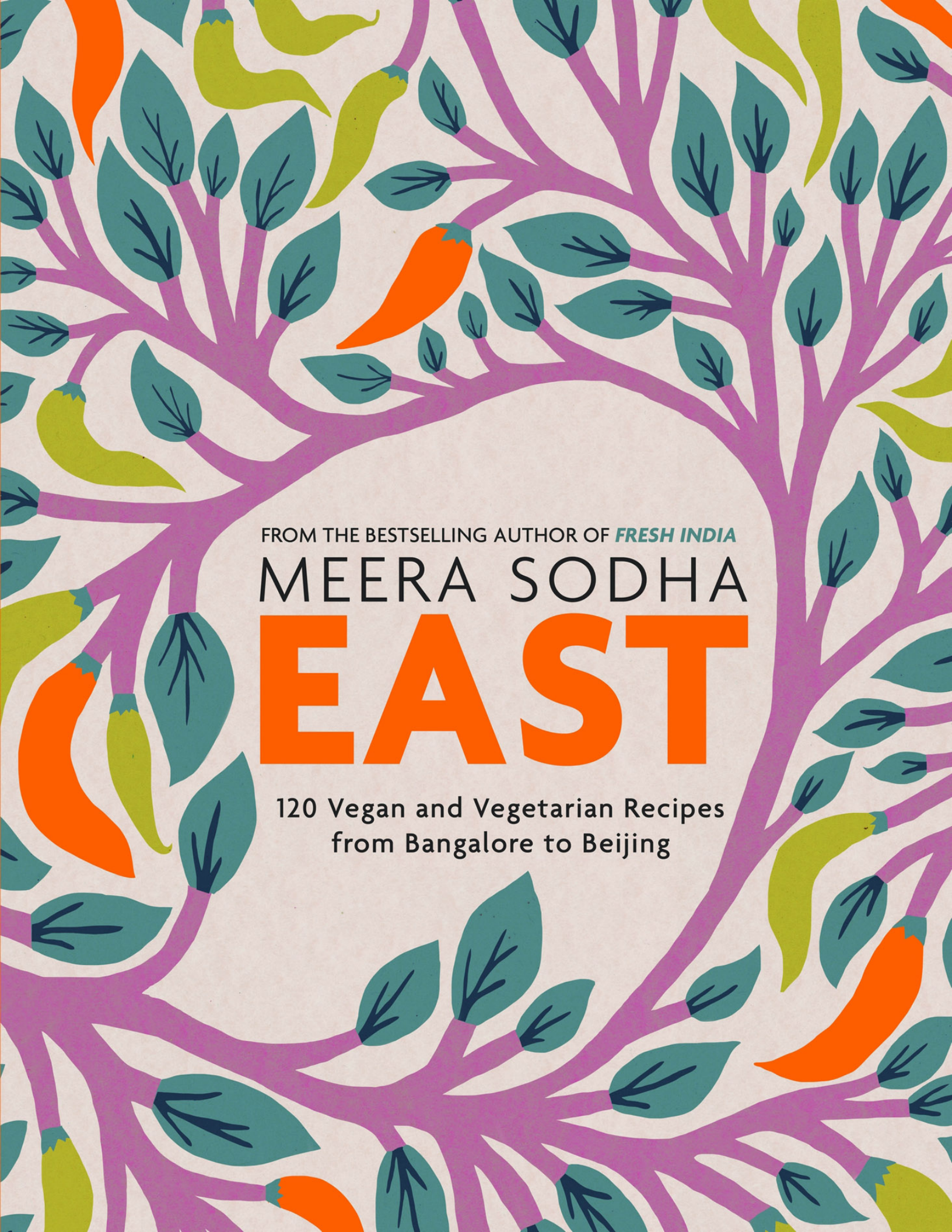
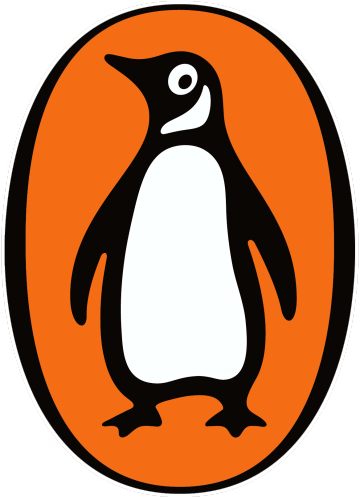

FROM THE BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF *FRESH INDIA*
MEERA SODHA
EAST
120 Vegan and Vegetarian Recipes
from Bangalore to Beijing



MEERA SODHA

EAST

120 Vegan and Vegetarian Recipes from Bangalore to Beijing

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Meera Sodha is the *Guardian*'s 'New Vegan' columnist and author of *Fresh India*, which won the Observer Food Monthly Best New Cookbook Award 2017. In 2018 she was given The Guild of Food Writers 'Cookery Writing Award' and named the Fortnum & Mason Cookery Writer of the Year for her work in the Guardian. Her first book, *Made In India*, was a top ten bestseller. Meera Sodha cooks, writes and lives in London with her husband and daughter.

By the same author

Made in India
Fresh India

For John Hamilton (1963–2019)
I feel so lucky that our paths crossed

PIE & MASH
LIQUOR & EELS

INTRODUCTION

Life can change in an instant, like mine did with a phone call.

That's how I felt when Melissa Denes, an editor at the *Guardian*, rang me. She said they were introducing a new vegan column into the weekend magazine and she wanted me to write it. In my most private moments I had dared to dream about writing a column, but I never seriously thought it would happen. As I weighed up the options, I realized there were a few small problems.

For a start, I wasn't vegan.

Secondly, up until that point, I had only written about Indian food.

Thirdly, I'd just had a baby who was a few weeks old. Not only had life just been thrown into chaos with her arrival, but I'd planned to take a whole year off to get to know her.

This was an amazing opportunity that had come at the worst possible time. I had every reason to say no, but I said yes.

I was excited to enter this brave new world in which I found myself. Huge numbers of people, growing by the day, were choosing to eat a more plant-based diet, whether for political, environmental, ethical or economic reasons. Although a relatively small number were actually becoming vegan, a larger number

were looking to reduce the amount of meat and dairy in their diet. This felt like a big and important discussion — I wanted a chance to be a part of it and help move the conversation forward.

At that time, many of the recipes being touted for vegans weren't tempting. They didn't make me hungry. Plant-based food was either still in the shadows of its association with hemp-trouser-wearing hippies or hijacked by healthy eating. It felt as though the pleasures of eating and the importance of flavour had been forgotten.

As an outsider, I thought I was in a good place to create new and exciting vegan recipes. I understood meat-eaters and knew the textures, flavours and the 'richness' they might miss. But I had also spent two years writing a vegetarian book, *Fresh India*, and knew how to make bitter cavolo nero leaves sing and how to tempt a beetroot hater into eating a plateful.

I signed the contract with the *Guardian* and so began my journey. It started with some difficult first weeks, but winter turned to spring and suddenly two years had passed. I learned many things along the way.

I was stuck for new recipes to begin with, but I suspected that by looking beyond India to East Asia and South East Asia I would find further inspiration for how to shift vegetables from the side to the centre of the table. I had already travelled to Sri Lanka and eaten sublime beetroot and cashew curries. In Thailand, I had memorized every twist in the plot of som tam salad and counted down the minutes between meals until my next pad thai. I had

been soothed inside out by my first congee in Hong Kong, and then had my taste buds electrified in Chinatown in London with a bowl of dan dan noodles. I was hungry for more.

I also found vegan constraints are a catalyst for creativity. Not cooking with meat, fish, dairy or eggs forced me to think in new and interesting ways. I discovered the wonderful world of the Asian larder: fermented, pickled and salted ingredients – things like kimchi, sweet miso and gochujang, all of which add flavour to a meal in an instant.

Veganism wasn't my only constraint. I had much less time on my hands too now that I was a new mum. This meant that elaborate dishes, or those that required too much time to prepare or cook, were left by the wayside. They didn't make the cut into my column, or into this book.

The biggest limitation of all was not being able to travel to the countries whose food I wanted to explore further. When writing my Indian cookbooks, I had travelled for months at a time, taking dog-leg turns when someone recommended a new dish, or a cook I had to meet. But Arya was still so young and dependent on me, and I didn't want to leave her. This time, I travelled by reading: I followed Fuchsia Dunlop around the streets of Chengdu and saw 1990s Jakarta through Madhur Jaffrey's eyes.

SPICE KITCHEN
INDIA FOOD & COOKING
Complete INDIAN Cookbook
BOTTOM of the POT
Sri Lanka
BANGKOK
THE SPORTSMAN
WELIGAMA
EVERY GRAIN of RICE
JERUSALEM
OTTOLENGHI SIMPLE
STIR CRAZY
RISSO TASTY

When I ran out of books, I packed baby Arya and a notebook into a little baby carrier and off we went on a food safari to find the best laksa, bun cha or massaman curry in London.

I found that I could travel to Asia without travelling very far at all. I spoke to my accountant, Ben, who is from Borneo, where Sarawak laksa is prized. I begged Wichet, the owner-chef of the Thai restaurant Supawan, to show me how to make a tom kha ghai soup, and Shuko Oda, the Japanese chef, to teach me how to make her walnut miso. I accosted home cooks on social media who had innocently posted photos of their breakfast to ask them more about what they ate and how they made it.

Two years later, the time felt right to bring all these recipes together in a book. Some are vegetarian, not vegan, because this is, in the main, how I like to eat – and therefore not all of them have featured in my column.

This isn't an attempt to be an authoritative voice on Asian food: to undertake such a survey would take years. This is food I've created in my kitchen based on a very personal journey and an adventure. And this is now how I like to cook for my family and friends, and for myself. It is the food I've come to love – and I hope you love it too.

As I finish writing this book, Arya is a toddler and starting to piece her first words together. I've felt so much guilt along the way and I am sure this tension between work, life and motherhood will always be present. But if there's one lesson that I

wanted to teach my daughter from the moment I met her, it is this: she should dream. Sometimes what she dares to dream won't be easy to achieve, but it'll be worth it in the end.

ABOUT THIS BOOK

Principally, I have written this book because I love vegetables and want to help you to eat more of them – it's therefore intended to be a very practical book. For that reason it's deliberately structured by the types of meals you will find across South, East and South East Asia, i.e. noodles, rice and curries. There may have been more poetic ways to structure it, but I wanted to help you find your heart's desire quickly, so that you're able to get on with the joyful business of cooking, eating and spending time with your family and friends.

Many of the recipes I originally wrote for the *Guardian* over the last two years are published here in this book. I've tried not to tinker with them too much, but where a recipe could have been made simpler without destroying its soul, I have simplified it.

Most of the recipes are based on foods native to particular cuisines which I have eaten in a home or restaurant and then tinkered with to make my own. Others are adaptations of recipes from home cooks or other food writers (who are credited within the recipe). I don't claim that anything in the book is authentic to anywhere, other than myself, but where I have used the name of a dish of a particular community – for example the Korean bibimbap – I've tried my best to stick as closely to either the

ingredients that identify that dish and/or cooking technique as possible.

The recipes in this book are by and large speedy enough to make during the week and with ingredients you can most likely find in your local supermarket. When it comes to ingredients, when you start with the best, life becomes simple. I didn't always feel this way, especially not after watching home cooks in Dharavi, India's biggest slum, transform some very old, bendy vegetables into delicious meals. But what I now know to be true is that the more delicious the raw ingredient, the less you have to do to it.

It is also true that we are all, as George Orwell said in *The Road to Wigan Pier*, 'primarily a bag for putting food into; the other functions and faculties may be more godlike, but in point of time they come afterwards'. Considering we all have only one bag, we ought to treat it with the utmost care.

To me, 'best' means produce grown by good people in good ways: unfussed with, largely chemical-free, locally and in season. And where produce involves animals (dairy and eggs), those animals must be happy and well looked after, meaning 'free range', 'organic' and 'higher welfare'. But 'best' may mean something different to you.

As for the Asian store-cupboard ingredients, many are salted, pickled or fermented, such as soy sauce – the techniques and time for which are beyond the means of most home cooks. Embrace this, it's not cheating – but buy the best products you

can and always check the labels to see if they're suitable for vegans or vegetarians.

Many can be bought in supermarkets in the broadly named 'ethnic aisle', or in Indian or Chinese supermarkets, or online (a list of suppliers is on page 293). I would urge you to find your local Indian or Chinese shop and buy from there – not least because these places are like Aladdin's caves, filled with unimaginable treasure, but also because you can pick up really good-quality, fresh and cheap ingredients such as silken tofu, bunches of basil and fresh kimchi.

With regard to equipment, I think you'll have most things you'll need in your kitchen to cook these recipes. The tools I have found most helpful in making the recipes in this book are: a sharp knife; a 28–30cm non-stick deep-sided frying pan with a tight-fitting clear lid (to see what's cooking); a garlic press; and a julienne peeler that can transform vegetables into long thin noodles perfect for salads. Every recipe has been written using standardized measuring spoons and a set of digital scales; scales aren't always necessary, but they are helpful in baking recipes, where precision is key, and they will also help to develop your intuition, which can make for a more freestyle way of cooking when you gain your kitchen confidence.

And finally, on building that confidence I want to leave you with the advice my mother gave me when I first started cooking with her – and which still remains the best piece of advice anyone has

ever given me: ‘Taste your ingredients before, during and after cooking – that way you’ll understand how they behave.’

KEY

In the recipes, ‘V’ is for ‘vegan’ and ‘VO’ is for ‘vegan option’ (the option is clearly indicated in the ingredients or recipe note). All unmarked recipes are suitable for vegetarians.

Many recipes can be made gluten-free or suitable for coeliacs simply by substituting the soy sauce with tamari.

snacks & small things

There are those who righteously stand up for breakfast as the most important meal of the day and those who tout the benefits of family dinners (and I'm not denying either). But where is the ambassador for snacking? If the position is vacant, I'll happily apply.

In my opinion, a life well lived is a life full of small edible delights: little opportunities of deliciousness that can be woven into a day. Sadly, in much of Europe and America, we've become a bit too hooked on very convenient but highly processed and sugary snacks – the sort that are mass-produced and presented in uniform packages in our corner shops and supermarkets. But in the Far East, for the most part, things are different and freshness and variety reign supreme.

In Bangkok, a snack might be a freshly pounded salad: the rising smell of lemongrass, mixing with chilli and garlic, catching on the midday heat and sending your taste buds into over-drive. In Darjeeling, you might polish off a plate of momos (see page 34): perfectly sized little dumplings with a big bang of flavour, dipped into chilli sauce. In Hanoi you might float down the Mekong River while chomping your way through a sizzling rice-flour crêpe (see page 197), doused in the famous sweet-and-sour Vietnamese sauce, nuoc cham.

At their best, snacks like these can be the best thing you'll eat all day: artfully made by masters of their craft – and not just the filler between more important meals. They can be enjoyed when you're on your own – standing up at a night market, or sitting on a train platform – or with a group of friends. When it comes to snacking, there are no rules.

Of course, everyone is anti-snacking these days for health reasons, but snacks don't have to be unhealthy, especially if you make them yourself. I hope this chapter will inspire you to think a little more about those in-between moments, and make the most of them.

Recipe List

MUSHROOM BAO

SWEET POTATO CAKES with kimchi mayo

ONIGIRI stuffed with walnut miso

CHILLI SALT PINEAPPLE

CELERY AND PEANUT WONTONS with chilli soy sauce

MUM'S BEETROOT AND GINGER SOUP

POTATO DOSA with pea and coconut chutney

SWEET POTATO MOMOS

OVERNIGHT SOY EGGS

WILD MUSHROOM MISO BROTH

SWEET CHILLI CASHEWS

MUSHROOM BAO

V

There is genuine pleasure to be had in things that feel just right: the weight of a pound coin, a bath at the perfect temperature, the feel of a well-worn wooden spoon. To this list, I'd add the bao: this little bun, a staple of Taiwanese street-food stalls, is ergonomically designed for eating – it fits snugly into the nook of a hand; the pillowy dough gives like memory foam; and the semicircular shape slots cleanly into the mouth.

note / You'll need a steamer: the inexpensive bamboo ones are brilliant.

Makes: 10 bao /

For the bao buns /

375g plain flour, plus extra for dusting
1 tsp dried yeast
2 tbsp caster sugar
½ tsp salt
1¼ tsp baking powder
225ml warm water
rapeseed oil

For the pickled cucumber /

100ml rice wine vinegar
½ a cucumber, halved, deseeded and thinly sliced

Start by making the dough. Combine the dry ingredients in a bowl, then add the water little by little and bring the dough together using your hands; you should have a sticky ball. Turn it out on to a floured surface and knead for 5 minutes, until smooth and bouncy, then place in an oiled bowl. Cover with a tea towel and leave in a warm place to double in size for 1 to 1½ hours.

Meanwhile, put the vinegar for the pickled cucumber into a small saucepan with 3 tablespoons of water. Bring to a simmer, then pour into a bowl, add the cucumber and leave to cool.

Turn the dough out on to a floured surface, knead for a minute to knock out the air, then divide into 10 equal pieces. Take one piece, flatten it into a 1cm-thick disc, then brush one half with a little oil. Fold

For the mushroom filling /

- **6 tbsp light soy sauce**
- **4 tbsp peanut butter**
- **8 tsp rice wine vinegar**
- **4 cloves of garlic,** crushed
- **4 tsp toasted sesame oil**
- **2 tbsp rapeseed oil**
- **600g oyster and shiitake mushrooms,** thinly sliced
- **a handful of salted peanuts,** ground or finely chopped

the bun into a half-moon and place on a small square of baking paper on a tray. Repeat with the remaining dough, then loosely cover the tray with a tea towel and leave to rise for 30 minutes more.

Now for the filling. In a small bowl, whisk the soy sauce, peanut butter, vinegar, garlic and sesame oil. Heat the rapeseed oil in a frying pan on a high flame, then fry the mushrooms for 6 minutes, until soft and browning at the edges. Stir in the sauce to coat, then turn the heat to medium and cook, stirring regularly, for 5 minutes, until the sauce reduces and darkens.

To cook the bao, set a steamer over a pan of simmering water. Put the bao, still on their baking-paper mats, into the steamer in batches, making sure they don't touch. Cover and steam for 8 minutes.

Once done, fill each bao with a generous tablespoon of mushrooms, 3 or 4 slices of cucumber and, for a little crunch, some peanuts.

MUSHROOM BAO

SWEET POTATO CAKES with kimchi mayo

VO

One of the unspoken rules of cooking is that two sweet ingredients (like sweet potato and sweetcorn) shouldn't go together. They are apparently too sweet to complement each other. I disagree. In these savoury cakes they provide the perfect backing track on which the heat of the fresh green chilli and the sour creaminess of the mayo can sing.

note / Check the label of the kimchi to make sure it's suitable for vegans. You'll need a food processor or stick blender for this recipe.

Serves 4 /

For the sweet potato cakes /

400g sweet potatoes (2 medium)
1 green finger chilli, very finely chopped
100g sweetcorn, drained
a handful of fresh coriander, chopped, plus extra to serve
½ tsp salt
1 fat clove of garlic, crushed
3 spring onions, finely sliced

Preheat the oven to 180°C fan/200°C/400°F/gas 6.

Peel the sweet potatoes and cut into 3cm-thick chunks, then place on an oven tray and bake for 25 to 30 minutes until tender and a knife slips through them easily. Leave them to cool, then place in a bowl and mash with a fork until smooth.

Meanwhile, make the kimchi mayo by blending the kimchi and mayonnaise together, either in the small bowl of a food processor or using a stick blender. Scrape into a serving bowl and leave to one side.

To make the cakes, add the chilli, sweetcorn, coriander, salt, garlic and spring onions to the

rapeseed oil, to fry

For the kimchi mayo

/

50g kimchi

100g mayonnaise (or vegan mayo – see page 255)

mashed sweet potato and mix very well with your hands. Bring together into a ball. Cut the ball in half, then cut each half into 4 pieces so you have 8 equal pieces. Take a piece, roll between your palms to form a ball, then flatten into a round patty around 1cm thick. Place on a plate, then shape the rest.

To cook the cakes, heat a teaspoon of oil in a large non-stick frying pan over a medium-high heat. When hot, add 4 cakes (or as many as you're able to fit) to the pan and fry for 5 minutes, turning halfway through, or when lovely and golden on each side. (You can keep them warm on a plate in the oven at 100°C fan/120°C/250°F/gas ½.)

When you're ready to eat, place a couple of cakes on each plate, sprinkle with coriander and serve with kimchi mayo.

SWEET POTATO CAKES WITH KIMCHI MA YO

ONIGIRI stuffed with walnut miso

V

Onigiri are Japanese rice balls, made with sushi rice and often filled with pickles. They are the perfect portable snack. In the seventeenth century, Japanese samurai stored rice balls wrapped in bamboo to have as a quick lunch during war. Mine are stuffed with my variation on Shuko Oda's sweet, rich walnut miso, from her restaurant Koya in Soho.

note / If you don't have white miso, double the quantity of brown rice miso. You'll need a blender or food processor for this recipe.

Makes 8 onigiri /

400g sushi rice
2 sheets of nori

For the walnut miso /

120g walnuts
1 tbsp brown rice miso
1 tbsp white miso
2½ tbsp brown rice syrup
1 tsp rice wine vinegar

Preheat the oven to 180°C fan/200°C/400°F/gas 6.

Place the rice in a medium-sized lidded saucepan and cover with lukewarm water. Agitate with your hand until the water turns cloudy. Drain and repeat, until the water runs clear, then cover with warm water and leave to soak for 5 minutes. Drain the rice, then tip back into the saucepan and add 440ml of cold water. Place the pan over a high heat with the lid on, bring to the boil, then immediately turn the heat down to a whisper and cook for 10 minutes. Take off the heat and leave to steam with the lid on for a further 10 minutes.

While the rice is steaming, place your walnuts on a baking tray and toast in the oven for 6 minutes. Remove and allow to cool. Put both misos into a blender or food processor and add the brown rice

syrup and vinegar, then pulse to combine. Add the roasted walnuts and pulse a few more times until you have a chunky paste.

Now you are ready to shape the onigiri. Prepare your nori by cutting it into strips 3cm wide. You will also need a clean board and a bowl of water large enough to rinse your hands. With wet hands, take 100g of the cooked sushi rice and form it into a ball. With your thumb, make a deep indent in the centre. Take ½ tablespoon of the walnut filling and drop it into the indent. Shape the rice up and over the miso filling and squeeze into a dense ball. Place this in the middle of a strip of nori, and bring the nori up around the onigiri so that it looks as if it is wearing a belt. Repeat with the remaining rice and miso, leaving you with 8 belted chubby onigiri ready for your lunch.

ONIGIRI STUFFED WITH WALNUT MISO

CHILLI SALT PINEAPPLE

V

Galle Face is a stretch of promenade in Colombo, Sri Lanka, where the land dissolves into sea and where, at sunset, the hungry go to feast on an array of colourful snacks. This sweet, sour and hot pineapple is one of them — not so much a recipe as a way to enjoy the fruit. The ratios of salt, sugar and chilli are just how I like them, but feel free to play around until it tastes just right to you. Best served at home alongside an arrack sour, or a gin and tonic.

Serves a small crowd

/

1 medium pineapple
1 tsp salt
2 tsp caster sugar
1 tsp Kashmiri chilli powder
1 tbsp lime juice (from 1 lime)

Cut the top and bottom off the pineapple and stand it upright. Using a sharp knife, carefully peel the skin off the pineapple by skirting the knife close to the flesh all the way around. Place on its side and nick any brown spikes out of the flesh using the tip of a small knife. Cut the pineapple lengthways into 8 pieces, removing the tough core from each wedge. Cut each wedge into 1cm slices.

Mix the salt, sugar and chilli in a small pretty bowl. Serve this next to the wedges on a bigger platter. Just before serving, sprinkle the pineapple wedges with lime juice and encourage people to dip the wedges into the chilli salt with their hands.

CELERY AND PEANUT WONTONS with chilli soy sauce

VO

Move over wood ear mushrooms, there's a new wonton filling in town: celery and peanuts. Usually these two ingredients are found together in refreshing crunchy salads on Chinese tables, but here they are cooked together to form a comfortingly delicious, sweet and sophisticated dish. This is unbelievably easy to make, given that the wonton wrappers – which I keep on hand in the freezer – just need to be pressed shut around the filling and the sauce is largely made up of store-cupboard ingredients.

note / Wonton wrappers can be found in larger or Chinese supermarkets. You'll need a food processor for this recipe.

Makes 24 wontons (serves 4–6) /

For the wontons /

160g unsalted peanuts
800g celery
4 tbsp rapeseed oil
4 cloves of garlic, crushed
2 tbsp light soy sauce
24 wonton wrappers (or egg-free gyoza wrappers, if vegan), defrosted

For the chilli soy sauce /

2 tbsp rapeseed oil

First, make the wonton filling. Place the peanuts in a food processor and blitz into crumble. Roughly chop the celery, setting aside some leaves to garnish the dish, then place in the food processor with the peanut crumble. Pulse until the pieces resemble coarse mince. Heat the rapeseed oil in a pan and, when hot, add the celery and peanut mixture. Cook for 15 to 20 minutes over a medium heat, stirring frequently to remove as much water as possible, then add the garlic and soy sauce and cook for a further 5 minutes. Take off the heat and leave to one side to cool.

To make the chilli soy sauce, place all the ingredients in a saucepan. Bring to the boil, then

1 tbsp toasted sesame oil
4 tbsp light soy sauce
2 cloves of garlic, crushed
1 tsp chilli flakes
1½ tbsp white wine vinegar
2 spring onions, chopped

immediately take off the heat.

To fill the wontons, lay a wrapper in front of you in a diamond shape. Put 1½ teaspoons of filling into the centre. Brush the edges of the wonton lightly with water and fold in half to form a triangle. Press down around the filling (to make sure there are no air bubbles), then press outwards to seal it properly and place on a plate. Repeat.

To cook the wontons, drop in batches (of around 6) into a pan of boiling water for 5 minutes at a time, then drain. To serve, divide the wontons between your plates, drizzle some of the sauce over each portion, then scatter over the celery leaves.

CELERY AND PEANUT WONTONS WITH CHILLI SOY SAUCE

MUM'S BEETROOT AND GINGER SOUP

VO

This is one of a handful of soups my mother has been making for years. I didn't include it in my first book, *Made in India*, because it didn't feel very 'Indian', but family recipes are messy, eclectic and wonderful things, forged over many years, that don't often fit into neat categories. When writing this recipe down, I asked Mum how much ginger to add. She said, 'According to the weather,' so the quantity given here is for a cold winter's day. By all means kick it up a notch for extra warmth.

note / This soup goes well with a chunk of grilled sourdough bread and thick tart yoghurt seasoned with a pinch of salt. Make sure the vegetable stock is suitable for vegans if you're a vegan.

Serves 4 /

3 tbsp rapeseed oil
1 large onion, chopped
2cm ginger, peeled and grated
3 cloves of garlic, crushed
1 green finger chilli, finely chopped
500g raw beetroot, scrubbed and grated
1 small potato (100g), peeled and grated

Heat the oil in a large saucepan and, once it's good and hot, add the onion and fry for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the ginger, garlic and chilli, then fry for 3 minutes, stirring all the while. Add the beetroot and potato, stir to coat, then pour in the stock and bring to the boil. Turn down the heat and leave to simmer for 30 minutes.

Leave the soup to cool a little, then blend and taste – add up to ¼ teaspoon of salt if you like. Transfer the soup into bowls and top with a spoonful of

750ml vegan vegetable stock

salt, to taste

thick yoghurt, non-dairy if vegan**, nigella seeds and grilled sourdough,** to serve

yoghurt and a sprinkling of nigella seeds. Serve hot with the grilled sourdough.

MUM'S BEETROOT AND GINGER SOUP

POTATO DOSA with pea and coconut chutney

V

'Have you eaten the potato dosa?' Rhea asked me while we cooked in her kitchen in Mumbai. 'It's grated potato which is pressed and pan-fried like a dosa.' Sounds a lot like a rösti, I thought, and perhaps that was its origin given that ideas can potentially travel 4,111 miles from Bern (the Swiss capital, where rösti originated) to Mumbai in a nanosecond via the Internet. In any case, here it identifies as a dosa, and is accompanied by a delicious pea and coconut chutney.

note / You'll need a food processor for this recipe.

Makes 4 /

40g desiccated coconut
200g frozen peas, defrosted, plus a handful to serve
1 clove of garlic, chopped
1 tbsp lime juice (from 1 lime)
2 green finger chillies, chopped
salt
2 large Maris Piper potatoes (600g)
½ a red onion, very finely chopped

To make the pea and coconut chutney, place the desiccated coconut in a small heatproof bowl, pour 100ml of just-boiled water over it and leave for 5 minutes. Transfer the coconut and water to a food processor, add the peas, garlic, lime juice, ½ a green chilli and ½ a teaspoon of salt, and blend until smooth. Scrape into a little bowl and leave to one side.

To make the dosas, peel and coarsely grate the potatoes. Put them into a clean tea towel and twist hard, over a sink, to squeeze out as much water as possible. Put the potatoes into a large bowl and add the onion, the 8 shredded curry leaves, the remaining 1½ green chillies, ginger, cumin seeds,

8 fresh curry leaves, plus 6 more to serve
1cm ginger, peeled and grated
½ tsp cumin seeds
¼ tsp ground black pepper
rapeseed oil

black pepper and ½ a teaspoon of salt. Mix, mix, mix with your hands until everything is well distributed.

Heat ½ tablespoon of oil in a frying pan over a low flame. Take a quarter of the mixture and form it into a rough round (don't worry if it's a bit juicy: it will stick together in the pan). Place in the pan and gently press with the back of a tablespoon to flatten it. Cook for around 5 minutes, then carefully flip over using a spatula, and cook for another 5 minutes, until crispy and brown. Remove to a plate – keep warm by covering with foil – and repeat with the remaining mixture.

Just before serving, drizzle a little oil into the pan while it's still hot and add the 6 whole curry leaves. Wait until the leaves crackle, then place it all on the chutney along with a handful of peas. To serve, stack the dosas on a plate with the chutney alongside.

POTATO DOSA WITH PEA AND COCONUT CHUTNEY

SWEET POTATO MOMOS

V

I ate my first momo in Darjeeling, at a stall run by an elderly Nepalese lady. As I waited, she filled and pleated a dozen with machine-like efficiency. I had low expectations, as the filling was a mix of white cabbage and carrot (neither is known for its striking personality) – but a torrent of flavour ripped through the first bite, and I returned to her stall many times to learn her secret. In this recipe I have filled them with sweet potato, but feel free to tinker with the filling: mushroom and tofu are good alternatives. The pleating might look daunting but momos can be pressed shut by toddlers without too much damage to aesthetics.

note / Dumpling wrappers are sometimes called 'gyoza dumpling wrappers' or 'dumpling pastry', and can be bought in a Chinese supermarket and kept in the freezer. Check the packaging carefully as some dumpling wrappers contain egg.

Makes 22–25 momos /

For the sauce /

2 tbsp toasted sesame oil
4 tbsp dark soy sauce
2 tsp caster sugar
1½ tbsp white wine vinegar
1 tsp chilli flakes

To make the sauce, simply whisk all the ingredients together in a small bowl and set aside until you serve.

For the filling, heat 2 tablespoons of oil in a frying pan and, when hot, add the garlic and chilli and sizzle for a minute, until it smells fragrant. Add the sweet potatoes, stir-fry for a minute, then add the soy sauce and salt, and cook for 3 minutes more,

For the dumplings /

rapeseed oil

2 cloves of garlic, crushed

1 bird's-eye chilli, finely chopped

400g sweet potatoes (2 medium), peeled and grated

2 tsp dark soy sauce

½ tsp salt

4 spring onions, very finely sliced

25 dumpling wrappers, defrosted

until there's no liquid left in the pan. Off the heat, fold in the sliced spring onions and leave to cool a little.

To make up the dumplings, lay out a large plate or chopping board and fill a little bowl with water. Take one wrapper (cover the rest with a damp tea towel to stop them drying out) and put a tablespoon of the filling mixture in its centre. Wet a finger and use it to dampen the exposed parts of the wrapper, then fold over to enclose the filling, and pinch and pleat the wrapper closed, working from one side to the other and pressing out as much air as possible.

To cook the dumplings, heat a tablespoon of oil in a saucepan on a low flame. When hot, add as many momos as can comfortably fit in a single layer, and fry for 2 minutes, until the bottoms are golden. Then add 5 tablespoons of water and cover the pan with a lid. Leave to steam for 6 to 7 minutes, or until the pastry is soft and the water has evaporated, and serve hot with the dipping sauce on the side.

SWEET POTATO MOMOS

OVERNIGHT SOY EGGS

These eggs should really be squirrelled away in the condiments section, but I thought they might get lost in there. They are perfectly seasoned and hugely versatile mouthfuls of joy. Since discovering them, I now eat them in the morning on toast with quickly fried greens, during the day on their own, and in the evening to top ramen (see page 92) or congee. I soft-boil a batch of eggs in the evening until just jammy, throw them into the marinade, and they're ready to use the next day and the whole of the following week.

Makes 6 eggs /

100ml light soy sauce
1 tbsp white wine vinegar
2 tbsp caster sugar
6 medium eggs

First, set up somewhere to leave your eggs to marinate. I like to use a Kilner jar, but you could also use a deep plastic box. Pour the soy sauce, vinegar, sugar and 150ml of cold water into your chosen container and stir to mix.

Next, take a bowl that will fit all the eggs and put a couple of handfuls of ice inside. Pour cold water into the bowl so that it's three-quarters full, and leave to one side.

To cook the eggs, take a saucepan just big enough to hold the eggs snugly (so they can't rattle around too much), fill it half full of water and bring to the boil over a medium-high heat. When the water is at a rolling boil, gently lower the eggs into the water using a large spoon. Cook for exactly 7 minutes (set a timer) from the moment the last egg hits the water.

Drain and pop the eggs into the bowl of iced water to cool off.

Leave for 10 minutes, then peel the eggs (it sometimes helps to peel under the water to keep them perfect) and drop into the soy mixture. Put a piece of kitchen paper over the eggs to keep them submerged, and place in the fridge. Leave overnight, then remove the eggs from the solution and transfer to an airtight container in the morning. They will keep for a week in the fridge (and the solution can be used for another round of eggs).

OVERNIGHT SOY EGGS

WILD MUSHROOM MISO BROTH

V

Miso is a tired cook's best friend and the time-poor cook's shortcut to an excellent meal. In this instance, I've used brown rice miso, an earthy, boldly flavoured miso, combining it with wild mushrooms for a delicious hot broth. It can be eaten on its own, but serving it with rice, as below, makes for a perfect lunch on an autumnal day.

Kombu is a flat natural seaweed which can be found dried in Asian supermarkets and health-food shops. It makes a great stock.

Serves 4 /

300g jasmine rice
6 spring onions
5cm ginger, peeled and sliced
25g dried shiitake mushrooms
1 sheet of kombu (12g)
1 bird's-eye chilli, slit
250g wild mushrooms (such as ceps, girolles, chanterelles), finely sliced
4 tbsp brown rice miso

First, cook the rice. Place the rice in a sieve and rinse under a cold tap until the water runs clear, then drain. Put the rice into a saucepan for which you have a lid, and cover with 450ml of freshly boiled water. Bring to the boil, then place the lid on, turn the heat down and simmer for 6 minutes. Turn the heat off but don't be tempted to lift the lid, and allow the rice to continue steaming until the soup is ready.

Next, make the soup. Pour 1½ litres of water into a large saucepan and set over a medium heat. Roughly chop 4 spring onions and add to the pan with the ginger, dried shiitake, kombu and chilli. Bring to the boil, reduce the heat to low and simmer for 10 minutes. Strain the stock through a fine sieve

into a bowl, pouring it very carefully so you leave behind the last couple of tablespoons that might be a little gritty from the dried mushrooms. Return the broth to the pan and discard the stock veg.

Bring the broth back to the boil and, when gently bubbling, add the sliced wild mushrooms to the pan. Reduce the heat to a simmer and cook the mushrooms in the broth for 4 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat and add the miso. Whisk gently to incorporate, then divide the broth and mushrooms between four bowls. Finely slice the remaining 2 spring onions, scatter over the broth, and serve alongside the steamed rice.

SWEET CHILLI CASHEWS

V

Addictive, and the perfect sidekick to a G&T.

Serves a small crowd

/

½ tsp salt
½ tsp chilli powder
¼ tsp ground black pepper
3 tbsp caster sugar
250g unsalted cashews

First, line a baking tray with baking paper. Next, put the salt, chilli powder and black pepper into a small bowl, mix well and leave to one side.

Put the sugar into a small frying pan over a medium heat and allow to melt into a clear pool without stirring. Once melted, tip in the cashews and spiced salt. Mix well, leave for a minute and then mix again to glaze each of the nuts. Cook for another minute, until the sugar starts to cluster on the nuts, then tip on to the lined baking tray. Press the nuts into a single layer with the back of a spoon and allow to cool completely.

salads

Salad often sits at the junction called ‘raw’, just after ‘prepping’ and just before ‘cooked’, which is exactly why, for centuries, it was almost written out of India’s culinary history. Given that water quality is still poor in many areas, raw vegetables are often associated with illness and so they haven’t been used in the same way as they have been in other countries in South East Asia or the Western world. Even in big cities like Mumbai and Delhi, where signs in restaurants eagerly point out that their vegetables have been washed in ‘bottled water’, salads are either in their infancy or take their lead from other countries. At worst, they are an afterthought by the chef: a few sliced onions and tomatoes on a plate.

Given my love of salad and Indian food, I have spent a lot of time in the middle of this Venn diagram, dreaming up what an Indian salad could look like. This chapter contains quite a few such imaginings.

Salads are a well-developed phenomenon in Thailand, Vietnam and Burma, however, and are unbeatable for their sometimes clean, sometimes complex but always invigorating flavours. My favourite Thai salads are the refreshing green papaya salad (som tam) and the lesser-known pomelo salad (yum som-o). Although both these salads use fruit, the fruit retains its sour bite and is perfectly balanced with a pounded dressing made using garlic, chilli, sugar and lime. Similar flavours are found in the famous Vietnamese dressing nuoc cham. Burmese salads, by contrast, have a much deeper savoury base note to them, which comes from using roasted chickpea flour and crispy fried onions to dress the salad with. Piquancy in Burma is added using pickles: pickled ginger, pickled lemon and even pickled fermented tea leaves.

Of course, salads are defined by different countries in different ways, but whatever the origin, what makes a great salad, in my opinion, is the following three things.

Firstly, it must be clear what the salad's role is. I'm not talking about whether it is a side or a main, but making sure the salad in question is balanced against the other dishes on the table so not everything is competing for your attention. For example, a brightly flavoured salad might only need a simple rice dish alongside.

Secondly, it needs contrasting textures. This can be as simple as making sure you have crunchy vegetables alongside soft sweet herbs, or throwing in a handful of toasted nuts or crispy shop-bought onions.

Thirdly, it needs shamelessly bold flavours. In East Asian salads this comes from the dressing, often an interplay between salt, sugar, acid and heat. But it also comes from using large handfuls of herbs, a mixture of spices, or a pungent sauce like soy. As a rule of thumb, a dressing should always taste slightly stronger and saltier before you dress your salad than you'd like it to be ultimately, as it will become diluted in the salad.

Finally, a word to the wise. Salads are nearly always best when made or dressed just before serving. This is in part because leaves wilt, vegetables brown and salted dressings draw out water from vegetables, making them soggy. No one loves wilted, brown sog, so keep it crisp and fresh and you won't go far wrong.

Recipe List

THAI SALAD with grapefruit and cashews

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PANEER, SPINACH AND TOMATO SALAD

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AVOCADO KACHUMBAR

DOUBLE RAINBOW SALAD

CARAMELIZED FENNEL AND CARROT SALAD with mung beans and herbs

THAI SALAD with grapefruit and cashews

V

A great Thai salad hits you from different angles. One moment it's sweet, the next hot, crunchy then sour, and you feel it not only on your tongue but also in your head and stomach, and the heat even travels to the tips of your fingers. This salad is somewhere between the classic Thai som tam, and the lesser-known citrus salad yum som-o, made with pomelos. Be sure to dress it just before serving, as the longer it sits, the more juice the grapefruit will release and the less potent it will be.

Serves 4 as a side or 2 for lunch /

- **1 pink or red grapefruit**
- **4 tbsp lime juice** (from 3 limes)
- **¼ of a small red cabbage (200g),** finely shredded
- **2 medium carrots (200g),** peeled and julienned
- **½ an iceberg lettuce (200g),** finely shredded
- **25g fresh Thai basil,** leaves picked and torn
- **1 tsp salt**
- **1 clove of garlic,** crushed
- **2 bird's-eye chillies,** very finely chopped

Place the grapefruit on a chopping board and cut a third off the end. Squeeze the juice of this third into a small bowl to get around 4 tablespoons of juice. Add the lime juice and keep to one side.

Peel the other two-thirds of the grapefruit, cut the flesh into segments and place in a large mixing bowl. Add the cabbage, carrots, lettuce and all but a handful of the basil leaves and mix. Add the salt, mix again, and set aside while you make the dressing.

Pound the garlic, chillies and sugar into a paste using a pestle and mortar. Add the soy sauce and muddle, then add the grapefruit and lime juice and mix again. If your pestle and mortar is large enough, add the oil and mix. If not, decant the dressing to a bowl, then add the oil and whisk to combine.

1½–2 tsp sugar (to taste)
1 tbsp light soy sauce
2 tbsp rapeseed oil
50g unsalted cashews, roughly chopped
30g crispy fried onions (shop-bought)

Pour the dressing over the salad, mix well, then tip on to a platter or into a salad bowl. Top with the remaining basil leaves, the chopped cashews and the crispy fried onions, and serve immediately.

THAI SALAD WITH GRAPEFRUIT AND CASHEWS

FORBIDDEN RICE SALAD with blistered Tenderstem and miso dressing

V

In the 1990s, black rice, once rare and 'forbidden' to all but the Chinese aristocracy, was cross-pollinated with a type of Italian risotto rice to create a beautiful variety called black venus. At around the same time, a Japanese seed scientist crossed Chinese kale with broccoli to produce a new vegetable whose stem is as delicious as its tip. It was named Tenderstem. This dish brings together these two plant-based creations – and it makes me wonder: what could we be eating in another few years' time?

note / Large supermarkets stock white miso and frozen podded edamame beans. They're also available online. You'll need a small blender to make the dressing.

Serves 4 /

For the salad /

300g black venus rice
rapeseed oil
200g Tenderstem broccoli
150g mangetout
1 avocado
¼ of a red cabbage (about 200g), shredded

Put the rice into a large pan, cover with plenty of water and bring to the boil. Once boiling, turn down the heat to a simmer and cook for 18 minutes, until tender. Drain into a sieve, then set the sieve over the same pan, cover with a tea towel and leave to one side.

Put all the dressing ingredients into a blender with 100ml of water and whizz. Taste, and adjust the salt, lemon and miso as you wish.

150g mixed radishes, trimmed and thinly sliced

150g frozen podded edamame beans, defrosted

For the dressing /

60g unsalted cashews

1cm ginger, peeled and chopped

3½ tbsp white miso

2 tbsp rapeseed oil

3½ tbsp lemon juice

1 tbsp brown rice syrup

1 tsp salt

For the vegetables, heat 1½ tablespoons of rapeseed oil in a large frying pan on a medium-high flame. Once hot, add the Tenderstem and cook for 2 minutes, then add a splash of water (about 3 tablespoons), toss and cover with a lid. Leave to cook for 5 minutes, until tender, then transfer to a plate. Add another drizzle of oil to the pan and, when hot, add the mangetout. Cook for a couple of minutes until nicely blistered, then add to the plate with the broccoli.

To assemble the salad, put the cooked rice into a large serving bowl. Peel and stone the avocado (do this at the last minute, so it doesn't discolour), then cut into wedges. Layer the cabbage, Tenderstem and mangetout over the rice, followed by the radishes, edamame and avocado. Drizzle over the dressing, mix and serve.

FORBIDDEN RICE SALAD WITH BLISTERED TENDERSTEM AND MISO DRESSING

TOMATO PONZU SALAD

V

Ponzu is a spiky, citrus Japanese sauce which, in this recipe, is made using soy, lemon and tangerine juice. When combined with the best tomatoes you can get your hands on, the citrus and salt take flight and elevate this into something very special.

Serves 4 as a side /

For the ponzu sauce /

- **1 tbsp toasted sesame oil**
- **3 tbsp tangerine juice** (from 1 tangerine)
- **1 tbsp lemon juice**
- **2 tbsp light soy sauce**

For the tomatoes /

- **400g ripe sweet cherry tomatoes,** quartered
- **1 large or 2 small shallots,** thinly sliced
- **a handful of fresh Thai basil or tarragon,** leaves picked

Place all the ingredients for the ponzu sauce in a small bowl and mix. Taste to check you're happy with the seasoning: as citrus fruits vary, you may need to add more tangerine juice for sweetness, more lemon juice for sharpness or more soy sauce to balance it.

Place the tomatoes and shallots in a serving bowl and pour the ponzu over the top. If the leaves of the herbs are quite big, rip them; if not, place them whole in the salad. Leave at room temperature for an hour or so for the flavours to mingle, then serve.

CHARGRILLED SUMMER VEGETABLES with a dhana-jeera dressing

V

Salads have not always been common fare in India due to poor water quality, but times are changing now and salads are gaining a place at the table. However, there's a lot of ground to make up, and I often wonder what future Indian salads might look like. This salad is such an imagining, using some of summer's finest produce alongside India's most notorious spice duo: cumin and coriander, or dhana jeera. Used with abandon in everyday curries, here they get a fresh lease of life, and the result is smoky, sweet, crisp and lip-tingling.

note / You can cook this salad on a barbecue or griddle pan. The timings are for a griddle pan, so if you're barbecuing, cook the vegetables until tender.

Serves 4 /

rapeseed oil
¾ tsp salt
1¼ tsp ground cumin
1½ tsp ground coriander
¾ tsp chilli powder
2 tbsp lemon juice
2 courgettes
300g Tenderstem broccoli
2 red onions

First, make the dressing. Put 4 tablespoons of oil into a small bowl, add the salt, cumin, coriander, chilli powder and lemon juice, and set aside.

Cut the courgettes lengthways into 0.5cm-thick slices. Trim the broccoli, and break bigger branches into individual stems. Peel and cut the onions into eighths. (If griddling, separate the onions into 'petals'.) Put a griddle pan on a high flame. Brush the vegetables all over with oil, and dunk the broccoli in

2 corn cobs, dehusked

oil, so the florets are coated. When the pan is very hot, lay in the courgettes in a single layer and grill for 2 minutes on each side, until pleasingly striped, then transfer to a platter.

Grill the onions for 5 minutes, until soft and blackened, then place on top of the courgettes. Grill the broccoli for 1½ to 3 minutes: you want to cook the stems without burning the florets, so use tongs to press the stems down, adding a splash of water to create some steam. Once tender, place on top of the onions.

Using tongs, hold each cob over a medium flame on the hob for about 5 minutes, rotating every 30 seconds or so, when the kernels start to blister and char. When the corn is cool enough to handle, stand it up in a bowl and cut down the length of the cob, close to the core, to shuck the kernels. Scatter these on top of the salad, whisk the dressing with a fork, pour over the top and gently toss to coat. Serve warm or at room temperature.

CHARGRILLED SUMMER VEGETABLES WITH A DHANA-JEERA DRESSING

PANEER, SPINACH AND TOMATO SALAD

Saag paneer, given a fresh new makeover.

Serves 4 as a main /

1kg vine tomatoes, large ones halved or quartered
5 cloves of garlic, unpeeled
4 tbsp rapeseed oil
2 tsp salt
2 red onions
225g paneer, cut into 2cm cubes
1 tsp ground cumin
1 tsp Kashmiri chilli powder
1 tsp garam masala
1 tbsp lemon juice
1 naan bread, cut into wedges
100g baby-leaf spinach

Preheat the oven to 200°C fan/220°C/425°F/gas 7.

Place the tomatoes in a roasting tin along with the garlic, then drizzle with 1 tablespoon of oil and ½ teaspoon of salt. Peel the onions, cut into 2cm wedges and put them into a separate roasting tin with the paneer, shuffling them into a single layer. Drizzle with 1 tablespoon of oil and sprinkle over another ½ teaspoon of salt. Place both tins in the oven for 25 minutes.

While the tins are in the oven, make the dressing. Combine the cumin, chilli powder, garam masala, lemon juice, 2 tablespoons of oil and 1 teaspoon of salt and whisk together.

When the 25 minutes are up, remove the onion tin from the oven, add the naan and toss together so the naan becomes coated in the oniony oil. Return to the oven and cook both tins for a further 8 minutes until the bread is crisp and brown at the edges, the onions are soft and burnished, and the tomatoes have blackened spots on them.

Use a slotted spoon to fish out the cloves of garlic and, when cool enough to handle, squeeze the soft flesh into the dressing and mix. Add the tomatoes to the onions, paneer and naan, leaving some of the

juices behind. Add the spinach and dressing, and enough of the tomato juices so that everything is coated and well mixed. Taste, adjust the seasoning if you like, and serve.

PANEER, SPINACH AND TOMATO SALAD

CHARRED COS LETTUCE with mint raita

VO

Once you've chargrilled a lettuce and found bliss in its bitter blackened edges and soft, sweet heart, it's hard to go back. The dressing here is based on a classic mint raita, but without the sugar — which makes it hotter and more tangy, in a very good way. You can char the lettuce on a griddle or briefly over indirect heat on the barbecue.

note / You'll need a blender for this recipe.

Serves 4 as a side /

15g fresh mint (about 10 sprigs), leaves picked
½ a green finger chilli, finely chopped
¼ tsp ground cumin
½ tbsp lime juice (from ½ a lime)
200g Greek yoghurt (non-dairy if vegan)
salt
1 tbsp rapeseed oil
2 heads of cos lettuce, halved lengthways

Start by making the raita. In a blender, combine the mint leaves, chilli, cumin, lime juice, yoghurt and ¼ teaspoon of salt. Blitz until smooth, empty into a small bowl and leave to one side while you char the lettuce.

Heat a griddle pan over a high flame. Combine the oil and ½ teaspoon of salt in a bowl, then brush over the cut sides of the lettuce. Place the lettuce halves face down on the griddle and cook for 4 minutes on the first side, or until charred, with the outer leaves crisping at the edges. Turn and cook for a further 2 minutes. The lettuce should still hold its shape.

Arrange the lettuce on a platter and drizzle with as much raita as you wish. Serve the rest in a bowl on

the table.

BURMESE MANGO SALAD with peanut and lime

V

This is inspired by a dish I ate at one of my favourite restaurants in Mumbai, called Burma Burma. So it is that I offer up my memory of its mighty and mouth-watering mango, peanut and lime salad.

note / When freshly made, this salad is great by itself or with seasoned and fried tofu, but if left a day it will release delicious juices and is wonderful with rice noodles. You can hand-cut the long strips of mango and carrot, but a julienne peeler will make quick work of it. Make sure you buy the hardest, greenest, most unripe mangoes you can find, because ripe mangoes will juice when you cut them.

Serves 4 /

2cm fresh ginger, peeled and julienned
1 bird's-eye chilli, finely chopped
5 tbsp lime juice (from 3 limes)
1 tsp salt
rapeseed oil
1 onion, halved and thinly sliced
4 cloves of garlic, thinly sliced
1½ tbsp chickpea flour

Put the ginger and chilli into a bowl, add the lime juice and salt, and leave to steep.

Put a plate by the stove and cover it with a piece of kitchen paper. Heat 5 tablespoons of oil in a non-stick frying pan over a medium flame and, when smoking hot, add the onion. Separate the slices using a wooden spoon and fry, stirring once or twice, until brown and crisp. Scoop out with a slotted spoon and put on the prepared plate. Fry the garlic in the same pan for 2 minutes, until golden

2 tbsp crunchy peanut butter

½ a sweetheart cabbage, finely shredded

2 unripe mangoes (500g)

2 medium carrots (200g), peeled and julienned

a handful of fresh mint leaves

a handful of fresh coriander leaves

a large handful (60g) of salted peanuts, crushed

brown (be watchful: it cooks quickly), then transfer to the plate.

Stir the chickpea flour into the remaining hot oil in the pan over a very low heat to create a paste. Stir constantly for a minute, then add the peanut butter, stir for another minute and take off the heat.

Put the cabbage into a large bowl. Peel the mangoes and shave with a julienne peeler until you hit the stone; or, if cutting by hand, cut the cheeks from the stone on all four sides and julienne. Add the mango and carrots to the cabbage. Reserve a handful of the fried onion to garnish, then add the rest, together with the fried garlic, to the cabbage. Toss, then pour over the chickpea and peanut paste and the ginger, chilli and lime mixture, and toss again. Taste, and adjust the lime and salt if need be. To serve, finely chop and add the herbs, toss one final time, and top with the crushed peanuts and remaining fried onion.

BURMESE MANGO SALAD WITH PEANUT AND LIME

ASPARAGUS AND MANGETOUT with chilli peanut crumbs

V

When it comes to cooking certain vegetables such as asparagus, less is more. But there is a time and a place to break the rules.

note / If you're using regular asparagus, just halve it lengthways.

Serves 4 as a side /

50g unsalted peanuts
4 tbsp rapeseed oil
2 cloves of garlic, finely sliced
1 bird's-eye chilli, finely sliced
50g breadcrumbs
½ tsp salt
1½ tbsp lemon juice
350g fine asparagus, tailed
250g mangetout

First, bash the peanuts using a pestle and mortar until fairly well ground.

Next, take a large frying pan for which you have a lid and place over a medium-high heat. Warm 2 tablespoons of oil and, when hot, add the garlic. Fry for 1 minute, until just starting to brown, then add the chilli and peanuts. Fry for a further minute, then stir in the bread-crumbs and salt, and fry for a further 2 minutes, stirring regularly, until the breadcrumbs are darkening and the peanuts are showing touches of brown. Add the lemon juice, stir to combine, and empty it all into a bowl.

Carefully wipe the pan clean with kitchen paper and return to the stove. Heat a tablespoon of oil in the pan and add the asparagus, shaking the pan gently so the asparagus falls into a single layer. Cook for 2 minutes, giving the pan a little shake halfway through. Put the lid on and steam for a final minute, then tip the asparagus on to a platter.

Heat the final tablespoon of oil and add the mangetout, cook for 2 minutes, then return the asparagus to the pan. Toss all the veg together with half the peanut chilli crumbs, then transfer to a serving platter and finish with the remainder of the crumbs.

ASPARAGUS AND MANGETOUT WITH CHILLI PEANUT CRUMBS

AVOCADO KACHUMBAR

VO

A tale of two salads (or a salad of two halves): silky-smooth thick cream made of avocado and yoghurt, topped with crunchy fresh vegetables marinated in a lemon and oil dressing. This is great alongside slices of hot naan bread and can be used as a side, or as a dip to serve a crowd.

note / You'll need a blender for this recipe.

Serves 4 as a side /

½ a cucumber
10 radishes, trimmed and quartered
¼ of a red onion, very finely chopped
3 medium vine tomatoes, cut into 1cm dice
5 sprigs of fresh mint, leaves picked and chopped
3 tbsp rapeseed oil
zest and juice of 1 lemon
salt
3 avocados
100g Greek yoghurt, or thick non-dairy yoghurt, if vegan

Cut the cucumber in half lengthways and run a teaspoon down the middle to scrape out the seeds. Discard, then chop the flesh into 1cm cubes. Place in a bowl with the radishes, red onion, tomatoes, mint, oil, lemon zest and 1 tablespoon of lemon juice. Season with 1/3 teaspoon of salt, and taste and adjust as you see fit.

Make the avocado dip just before serving. Destone the avocados and place the flesh (you should get around 300g) in a blender with the yoghurt, remaining tablespoon of lemon juice and 1/3 teaspoon of salt. Taste, and adjust if need be.

To serve, pour the avocado dip on to a lipped serving plate, and use the back of a spoon to smooth it out to the edges of the plate. Using a slotted spoon, pile the chopped vegetables into the centre, and finish with a drizzle of the vegetable juices.

AVOCADO KACHUMBAR

DOUBLE RAINBOW SALAD

V

This salad is so called due to the magic moment of alchemy I experienced when a few vegetables came together in perfect harmony, much like when the sun's light refracts through the water droplets in the atmosphere to form a rainbow. Well, that and it is a very pretty and colourful salad (in both looks and personality) to serve to guests.

note / Substitute radishes for the kohlrabi and mooli if you can't find them. You'll need a blender for this recipe.

Serves 4 as a side /

- **250g red cabbage** (about 1/3), finely sliced
- **1 medium carrot,** peeled and cut into thin coins
- **150g frozen podded edamame beans,** defrosted
- **200g kohlrabi or mooli,** cut into matchsticks
- **80g baby-leaf spinach**
- **5 tbsp toasted sesame oil**
- **2 tbsp rapeseed oil**
- **40g fresh coriander,** roughly chopped
- **2 tbsp lime juice** (from 1½ limes)

Put the cabbage, carrot, edamame, kohlrabi and spinach into a large serving bowl.

To make the dressing, put the oils, coriander, lime juice, ginger, garlic, salt and chilli flakes into a blender and whizz until smooth. Scrape out every last bit into the salad bowl and mix using your hands – which will help wilt the salad a little – just before serving.

1½cm ginger, peeled and roughly chopped
1 clove of garlic, roughly chopped
1 tsp salt
1 tsp chilli flakes

CARAMELIZED FENNEL AND CARROT SALAD with mung beans and herbs

V

The long-neglected mung bean has much to give if you let it into your kitchen. Cooked quickly, it becomes a nutty addition to a salad; cooked slowly, and you'll find yourself with a creamy dal; soak it, and it will magically sprout, like Jack's beanstalk.

Serves 4 /

2 large carrots (400g), peeled and cut into thin batons
2 fennel bulbs (500g), thinly sliced, fronds reserved
3 cloves of garlic, unpeeled
olive oil
salt
1 tsp chilli flakes
125g mung beans
125g giant couscous

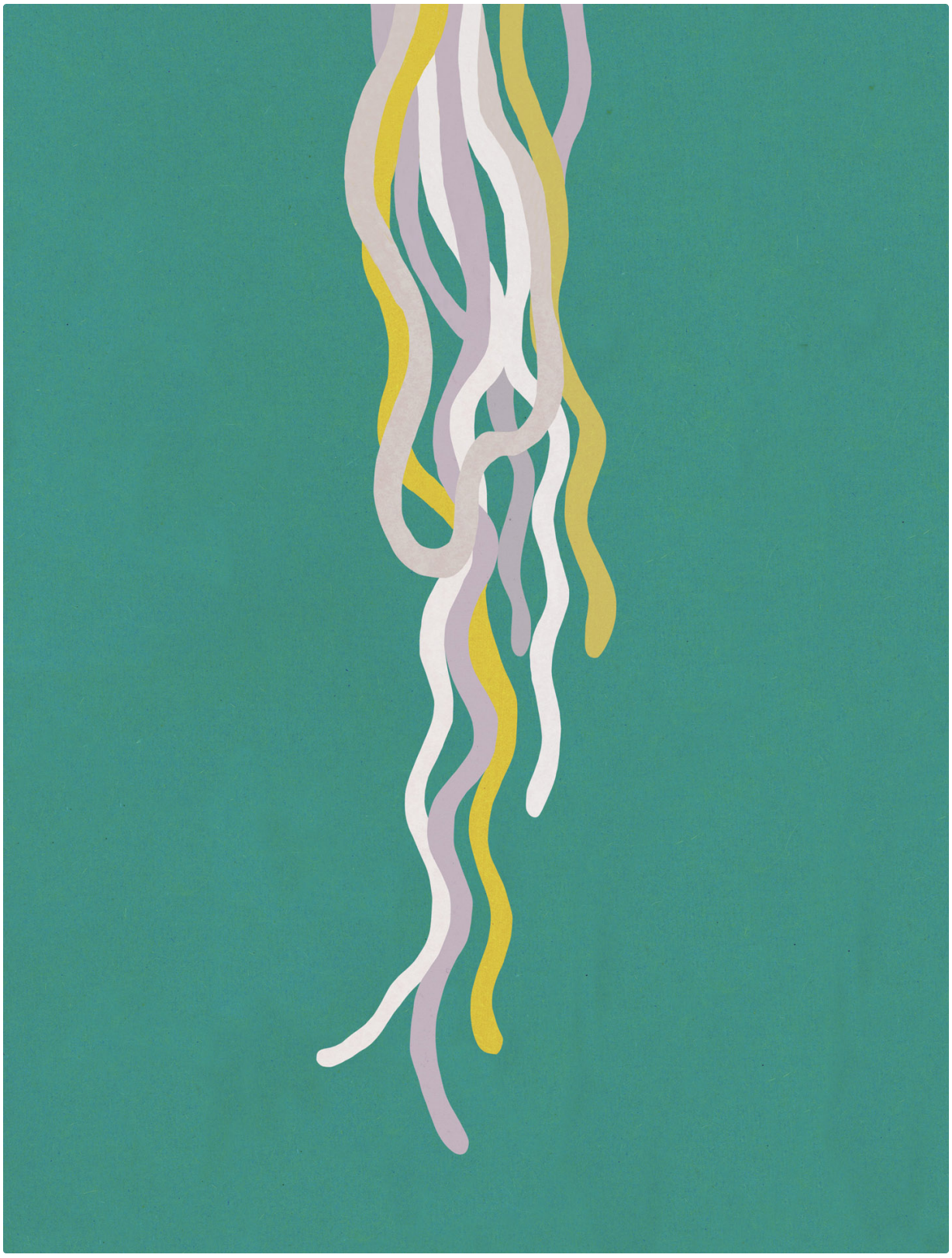
For the dressing /

10g fresh dill, tough stalks removed
30g fresh parsley
10g fresh mint
1½ tbsp lemon juice

Preheat the oven to 200°C fan/220°C/425°F/gas 7 and line two baking trays with foil.

Lay the carrots, fennel and garlic in a single layer across the two trays. Mix 4 tablespoons of oil, ½ teaspoon of salt and the chilli flakes in a small bowl, spoon over the vegetables, then toss with your hands to make sure everything is well coated. Roast for 30 minutes, tossing the vegetables halfway through to ensure they cook evenly.

In the meantime, put the mung beans into a saucepan, cover with plenty of cold water, bring to the boil, then simmer for 15 minutes. Add the couscous to the pan, turn up the heat and boil for 6 to 8 minutes until tender, then drain thoroughly.



noodles

Say the word and you form the shape with your mouth.

For years, the only noodle I knew was Sharwood's Medium Egg. As reliable as a Labrador, they were cooked in our house in the way that is common in Indian houses: in an Indian-Chinese-style stir-fry with lots of chilli, garlic, ketchup, soy sauce and whichever vegetables happened to be at hand. After many years and multiple trips to Chinatowns up and down the country, I learned to move beyond 'Medium Egg' and unravel the vexed subject of the noodle, so here's a quick guide to choosing, cooking and handling all the different varieties.

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UDON
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BUCKWHEAT SOBA
WHOLE-
WHEAT

COOKING AND PORTION SIZE

The first step to mastering noodles is preparation. For many noodle dishes you need to throw the ingredients into the pan in quick succession before the noodles are mixed in, so make sure you have all your ingredients chopped and ready to go. In many cases, this means having the noodles cooked and ready too (which I'll come to next).

To boil or to soak?

Most wheat-based noodles can be boiled in plenty of water, just like pasta. You can follow the timings on the packet, but again, just as with pasta, when the insides are no longer crunchy or chalky, the noodles are cooked. Rice noodles are a little different in that most cooking instructions call for soaking in freshly boiled water, with no active 'cooking'. Whichever way you cook your noodles, if you're using them in a stir-fried dish, it's a good idea to take them out of the water just shy of being 'done', because you'll be reheating and cooking them again in the pan.

Drain and refresh

Where a recipe asks you to have your noodles prepared in advance, it's best to stop them from cooking and clumping by placing them in a colander, rinsing them with plenty of cold water, allowing them to drain and rubbing through a little oil, using your hands.

Mixing

Mixing pre-cooked noodles into vegetables or a sauce is an art. Ensure you have a big enough pan or bowl and a good

tool, like a spaghetti fork or a pair of salad servers, to help. Metal utensils can cut noodles and wooden spoons are no good to you here.

Portion size

Most packets suggest 60–80g of noodles per person. Personally, I find 80–100g more appropriate for a dry noodle dish and around 50–75g perfect for noodle soup, but as with all portion sizes it depends on what else is going into the dish, the type of noodle and, of course, people's appetites.

TYPES OF NOODLES

Wheat noodles

Wholewheat noodles

These are the workhorse of my noodle cupboard. I like them for their square shape, delicious wholemeal flavour and versatility (you can use them in both stir-fries and soups). They're widely available, suitable for vegans and easy to work with.

Egg noodles

These nests, curled up like the peaks of Hokusai's *Great Wave*, are most commonly associated with dishes like Chinese chow mein and generally cook within just 4 minutes. Although they are called 'egg noodles' they are predominantly made from wheat and can contain anywhere from 5 to 15 per cent egg. The egg, in my experience, gives the noodle a fraction more bounce, richness and slipperiness than the slightly stickier wholewheat noodle, but you can use either in the recipes in this chapter. Readily available, they come in 'medium' and 'fine'.

Ramen noodles

Ramen noodles are made from wheat with the special addition of alkaline salts, which ensures they don't turn to mush in a hot soupy ramen. How 'al dente' the ramen noodle should be when served appears to be a hotly debated subject in Japan: in some ramen restaurants you can ask for your noodles to be *yowarakame*, meaning 'soft', *futsuu*, 'normal', or even *katamen*, 'hard'. I am quite a slow eater and therefore enjoy mine hard. Play around with the cooking times: don't be afraid to undercook them and see

if you prefer them that way. Available dried in big supermarkets, Chinese grocers and online.

Udon noodles

These are my secret favourite for their big bounce and table-silencing chewiness. They are made from wheat and water and are available both dried and partially cooked. Dried udon noodles are similar to fat fettuccine, but the partially cooked 'straight to wok' or frozen udon noodles are as thick as a pencil and nice and plump. Both are available from supermarkets and Chinese grocers.

DOUBLE PANDA
NOODLE
NO USE FOOD DYE
FINE 1mm
Net weight: 400g
担担麵
壽桃 SAUTAO
3人份
保鮮濕麵
不用冷藏
Tan Tan Noodle
wang
KOREA
메밀국수
BUCKWHEAT NOODLE
NOUILLE SOBA
NET WT/POIDS NET : 300 g · 10.58 oz
泰國河粉
THAI
RICE STICK
Nouilles thaïes
Thaise Rice stick
Thailändische Reisnudeln
Palito de arroz tailandés
5mm
400g
GOLD — PLUM
龍口粉絲
LONGKOU
VERMICELLI
Vermicelle
Vermicelli
Fadrnnudeln
Fideos
500g
MÌ TRỨNG
EGG NOODLE
TRẦN NHI
Net: 400gr
600g

Buckwheat soba noodles

These Japanese noodles are made from anything between 10 and 100 per cent buckwheat flour (the rest being wheat). They have a very slippery texture and a smashing nutty flavour. Traditionally, they are served cold with a dipping sauce or hot in a broth. In the summer I love to eat these noodles cold, coated in a sauce made with herbs and pistachios (see page 91). They're available dried in supermarkets and Chinese grocers.

Rice noodles

Rice vermicelli noodles

Vermicelli noodles are playful. Having a hundred little wriggly noodles attached to my chopsticks or mouth is my idea of a good time at the table. They're most famously used in Singapore noodles (see page 95) but also in bun cha, the fresh and zingy Vietnamese salad (see page 181). They are gluten-free, which is great for coeliacs, and they are available in most supermarkets.

Rice sticks

These thin rice noodles, 3–5mm wide, are used for pad thai and are very similar to the noodles which are used in Vietnamese soup, pho. They're found in Chinese grocers, but you'll find folded 'medium rice' noodles in most supermarkets and these make a good substitute.

Other noodles

Glass noodles

Glass noodles go under various names and are often called cellophane noodles or bean thread noodles. They look

much like rice vermicelli noodles, but as their name suggests they're glass-like in appearance. They're most commonly made using mung bean starch (which are the ones I use in the Thai clay pot noodles on page 84), but they can also be made from sweet potato starch or pea starch. They are wonderfully slippery and absorb flavours very well. You may need to cut them with scissors as they can be quite long (too long to fit into most of my saucepans). Available from Chinese grocers or online, the best way to cook them is to soak them in boiling water until tender.

BREAKFAST AT SHUKO'S

When Shuko Oda first opened Koya in Soho, rumours spread around the city like hot butter. Firstly, Shuko had created some of the finest udon noodles anyone could eat without jumping on a plane to Japan. Secondly, these noodles were kneaded by foot! It transpired that both of these rumours were true, and suddenly everyone flocked to worship at the altar of this modestly brilliant place.

This dish, kama tama (or raw egg and soy udon noodles), is on the breakfast menu at Koya, although in my opinion it makes for a lovely quick lunch too. The recipe might only have three key ingredients, but it is as sophisticated as it is simple to make.

note / The best udon noodles to use here are the plump, partially cooked 'straight to wok' noodles. If you use dried noodles, you'll only need 200g and a tablespoon of additional water to loosen when you mix them with the egg yolks and soy.

Serves 2 /

300g 'straight to wok' udon noodles
2 medium egg yolks
1 tbsp soy sauce
optional: 1 sheet of nori, shredded

Bring a large pan of water to a rolling boil, then drop in the noodles and cook until they are al dente. This should take around 3 minutes for the 'straight to wok' udons or 4 to 7 minutes if you're using the dried wholewheat type.

Meanwhile, in a large mixing bowl, mix together the egg yolks and soy sauce. When the noodles are cooked, drain well and immediately add to the egg

mixture, mixing really well so they are coated in the sauce. Divide the noodles between two bowls, and sprinkle with shredded nori if you like. Serve immediately.

BREAKFAST AT SHUKO’S

SWEDE LAKSA

V

A wise man (OK, Jay Rayner) once said of laksa's medicinal properties that 'it should be available on the NHS by prescription', and I agree. With its searing chilli, ginger and garlic enveloped by a blanket of noodles and coconut soup, laksa is a wonderful antidote to colds and cold weather. I urge any swede-dodgers to think twice: its buttery earthiness, alongside the caramelized shallots, adds a sweet and smoky magic.

Serves 4 /

- **6 cloves of garlic,** roughly chopped
- **3cm ginger,** peeled and roughly chopped
- **4 tsp Kashmiri chilli powder**
- **2½ tsp ground cumin**
- **2 lemongrass sticks,** bases only, roughly chopped
- **30g fresh coriander**
- **6 banana shallots**
- **1 litre vegan vegetable stock**
- **rapeseed oil**
- **1 x 400ml tin of coconut milk**
- **1½ tsp salt**
- **1½ tsp sugar**
- **800g swede** (about ¾ of a large one), peeled

Preheat the oven to 200°C fan/220°C/425°F/gas 7 and line two large baking trays with foil.

To make the laksa paste, put the garlic, ginger, chilli powder, cumin, lemongrass and coriander stems into a blender with 150ml of stock. Peel and roughly chop 2 shallots and add them to the blender too, then whizz to a paste.

Heat 2 tablespoons of oil in a deep-sided pot on a low flame and, once hot, scrape the paste into the pot. Cook for 10 to 15 minutes, stirring regularly so it doesn't catch, then slowly add the coconut milk until it's mixed in. Add the remaining stock, the salt and sugar, and simmer for 20 minutes until rich and flavourful. Season to taste, then take off the heat.

While the soup is cooking, halve the swede, cut it into 1cm-thick slices, then arrange on one of the lined trays. Peel and halve the remaining shallots

200g rice vermicelli noodles

2 limes, cut into wedges

lengthways, then separate them into 'petals' by removing the individual segments, and put these on the second lined tray. Lightly drizzle oil over both vegetables, toss with your hands so they're well coated, and sprinkle with a little salt. Roast the shallots for 20 minutes and the swede for 30 minutes, until cooked and caramelized.

Cook the noodles in boiling water as per the packet instructions (usually 2 to 3 minutes), then drain and rinse under cold water.

To serve, reheat the soup on a medium heat. Distribute the noodles between four bowls and ladle over the hot soup. Put the hot swede and caramelized shallots on top and sprinkle with coriander leaves. Squeeze a wedge of lime over each serving, and serve with more lime on the side.

SWEDE LAKSA

BEN BEN NOODLES

V

It burst my bubble when I found out that dan dan noodles, the infamous Sichuanese dish, was not named after two men called Dan but the type of pole used by street-sellers to carry baskets of noodles and sauce. But in this instance, the name 'ben ben' refers to my friend, the great cook Ben Benton, on whose recipe this dish is based. Here, shiitake mushrooms rub alongside tahini and chilli oil to make an astoundingly good sauce that is hot enough to put hairs on your chest.

note / You might need to hop into a Chinese shop for the Chinkiang vinegar and chilli oil – but if that's not an option you could substitute balsamic or white wine vinegar for the Chinkiang, and make your own chilli oil (see page 257). You'll need a food processor for the mushrooms.

Serves 2, generously

/

250g fresh shiitake mushrooms
1 tsp Sichuan peppercorns
1 tbsp rapeseed oil
40g pickled gherkins, finely chopped
2 spring onions, sliced diagonally
1 tbsp Shaoxing rice wine

Place the mushrooms in a food processor and blitz to lentil-sized pieces (but be careful they don't turn to soup). Put the peppercorns in a dry frying pan over a low flame and toast for around 4 minutes until fragrant, then grind with a pestle and mortar and set aside.

In the same pan, heat the oil over a high flame. Add the mushrooms and fry for 8 to 10 minutes until dark brown and beginning to crisp, pressing into a single layer with the back of a spoon to maximize crisping

2 tsp light soy sauce
200g wholewheat noodles
200g choi sum or baby pak choi, quartered

For the sauce /

3 tbsp tahini
3 tbsp light soy sauce
1 tbsp chilli oil, with sediment to taste
1 tbsp Chinkiang vinegar

potential. Add the gherkins, the spring onions and the ground Sichuan pepper, and fry for 2 minutes. Add the rice wine and soy sauce, and continue to cook for a further 2 minutes until dry and crunchy.

To make the sauce, mix all the ingredients together in a small bowl. The sauce will look a little split at first, but just keep mixing until it comes together. Cook the noodles according to the packet instructions, stirring to separate the noodles and adding the greens for the final 2 minutes.

Just before the noodles have finished cooking, fill a mug with the noodle cooking water. Drain the noodles and greens, place the greens to one side and the noodles in a bowl. Mix in the sauce and add the cooking water, tablespoon by tablespoon (I needed 6) until the noodles are nice and saucy.

Divide between two plates, put the mushroom mixture on top and the greens to the side of each bowl.

BEN BEN NOODLES

PEANUT BUTTER AND PURPLE SPROUTING BROCCOLI PAD THAI

V

In the late 1930s, Thailand's prime minister held a public competition to find a new national dish. The winning entry combined rice noodles, vegetables, peanuts, shrimp and egg. It was named 'pad thai' (*pad* meaning 'stir-fry') in a bid to promote a sense of Thai-ness. This vegan interpretation of that classic dish celebrates the brilliance of the original, while also bringing something new in the form of purple sprouting broccoli.

note / Pad thai is best eaten with as many garnishes as possible, so feel free to customize yours with fried shallots, pickled vegetables and crushed peanuts as you wish. Rice noodles are fragile, so be gentle with them.

Serves 4 /

For the pad thai sauce /

- 6 tbsp crunchy peanut butter
- 2 tbsp tamarind paste
- 3 tbsp brown rice syrup
- 4 tbsp soy sauce
- 3 tbsp fresh lime juice (from approx. 2 limes)

First, make the sauce by putting the peanut butter, tamarind paste and syrup into a bowl, then slowly mixing in the soy sauce, lime juice and 4 tablespoons of water.

Next, trim the broccoli, and put the florets into a bowl. Chop the stalks and leaves into 1cm pieces. Place the garlic, ginger, chillies and tofu in little piles within easy reach of the hob. Cook the noodles according to the packet instructions, rinse under cold water, drain, then drizzle with a tablespoon of rapeseed oil and toss gently with your hands.

For the tofu and broccoli /

450g purple sprouting broccoli

3 cloves of garlic, crushed

1.5cm ginger, peeled and grated

2 bird's-eye chillies, finely chopped

225g firm tofu, drained and cubed

250g flat folded rice noodles

rapeseed oil

6 spring onions, finely chopped

a handful of sesame seeds

toasted sesame oil

a handful of fresh Thai basil leaves, shredded

a handful of fresh mint leaves, shredded

1 lime, cut into 4 wedges

In a large non-stick frying pan for which you have a lid, heat 2 tablespoons of rapeseed oil on a medium-high flame, then fry the tofu for 5 minutes, turning every minute, until it's pale gold. Add the ginger, garlic and chilli, cook for 2 minutes, then add the broccoli stalks and 4 tablespoons of water, cover the pan and steam for 2 minutes, until the broccoli is tender. Add the broccoli florets, sauce and spring onions (reserve a handful for garnish), stir to combine, then cover again and leave for 2 minutes.

Turn the heat down to a whisper, add the noodles handful by handful, gently mixing them in until coated in sauce, then turn off the heat. Distribute the noodles between four plates and sprinkle over the sesame seeds and reserved spring onions. Drizzle each portion with sesame oil, scatter over the herbs and add a generous squeeze of lime, and serve immediately.

PEANUT BUTTER AND PURPLE SPROUTING BROCCOLI PAD THAI

MOUTH-NUMBING NOODLES with chilli oil and red cabbage

V

We need to talk about heat – not just the kind that comes from fresh chillies, but from peppercorns, ginger, horseradish or too much garlic. Heat can be many things but our language holds us back and so these ingredients are usually described in a one-size-fits-all way, as simply 'mild', 'medium' or 'hot'.

The hero of this dish, the Sichuan peppercorn, is a case in point. Muddy pink in colour, smelling of grapefruit, the Sichuan pepper lends an unusual citrus flavour to whatever it touches, creating a unique lip-tingling and mouth-numbing sensation – which isn't at all 'hot'.

note / You'll need a blender or electric spice grinder. Any leftover chilli oil can be kept in the fridge for a couple of weeks.

Serves 4 /

For the cabbage pickle /

220g red cabbage (about ⅓), finely shredded
½ a cucumber, seeds scraped out, sliced thinly
a handful of fresh mint leaves, chopped

To make the pickle, put the cabbage, cucumber and mint into a bowl, add the vinegar, sesame oil and a pinch of salt, and mix with your hands. Scatter with the sesame seeds and leave to one side.

In a blender or spice grinder, blitz the peppercorns and chilli flakes to a rough powder. Heat the rapeseed oil in a small saucepan over a medium flame, then add the garlic and let it sizzle for a minute or two, until it turns a pale gold. Stir in the

4 tbsp rice vinegar
1 tbsp toasted sesame oil
salt
1 tbsp sesame seeds

For the mouth-numbing chilli oil /

2 tbsp Sichuan peppercorns
4 tbsp chilli flakes
6 tbsp rapeseed oil
4 cloves of garlic, finely chopped
1 tsp caster sugar

For the noodles /

4 tbsp crunchy peanut butter
4 tbsp toasted sesame oil
400g wholewheat noodles

sugar, ½ teaspoon of salt and the ground peppercorn and chilli mixture, and take off the heat.

For the noodles, mix the peanut butter and sesame oil in a bowl with 1/3 teaspoon of salt. Cook the noodles according to the packet instructions, then drain, rinse under cold water and drain again. Put the noodles into a bowl, and add the peanut mixture and 2 table-spoons of chilli oil. Toss with your hands, making sure all the noodles are well coated, then season to taste.

To serve, lift the noodles on to a platter (or into four shallow bowls), top with the sharp crunchy cabbage, then add a drizzle of chilli oil, depending on your threshold for mouth-numbing heat.

MOUTH-NUMBING NOODLES WITH CHILLI OIL AND RED CABBAGE

WHITE MISO RAMEN with tofu and asparagus

V

In an unassuming corner of Westfield in Stratford is a joyful little Japanese canteen called Shoryu, where I had my mind blown by a ramen dish called 'white natural'. Unlike pork-dominated ramen dishes, white natural is made with soy milk and white miso, making it intensely silky. With apologies to Shoryu, I have tried to replicate it here.

note / You'll need a blender to make this. Don't be put off by the ingredients list: most of it goes straight into the blender. A good quality brand of soy milk, like Bon Soy, is best for this recipe.

Serves 4 /

For the noodle soup /

- **4 tbsp dried shiitake mushrooms**
- **1 onion,** chopped
- **4 cloves of garlic,** roughly chopped
- **2cm ginger,** peeled and roughly chopped
- **6 tbsp (150g) white miso**
- **1 tbsp tahini**
- **2 tbsp rapeseed oil**
- **3 tbsp soy sauce**
- **1 litre soy milk**
- **salt**

First, make the noodle soup. Put the dried shiitake into a heatproof bowl, cover with 200ml of just-boiled water and leave to soak for 5 minutes. In a blender, blitz the mushrooms (with their soaking liquid), onion, garlic, ginger, miso, tahini, oil and soy sauce. Put a non-stick frying pan on a medium heat and, when hot, scrape the paste out of the blender and into the pan. Cook for 10 minutes, stirring frequently, then add the soy milk, little by little, until it's all mixed in – make sure it doesn't boil, or it may curdle – then add salt, if need be, and take off the heat.

Next, cook the noodles according to the packet instructions, drain, rinse under cold water and drain

250g ramen noodles

For the tofu and asparagus /

rapeseed oil
250g fine asparagus
100g frozen podded edamame beans, defrosted
2 cloves of garlic, finely sliced
½ tsp chilli flakes
⅓ tsp salt
½ tbsp lemon juice
280g extra-firm tofu, drained and cut into into 2cm cubes
1 tbsp light soy sauce

again.

Heat a tablespoon of oil in a large frying pan over a high flame. When it's smoking hot, throw in the asparagus and edamame, leave for a minute, then turn and leave for a minute more, so both char a little. Add the garlic, chilli, salt and lemon juice to the pan, stir for a minute, then transfer to a bowl.

In the same pan, heat another tablespoon of oil if needed, then fry the tofu for a minute on each side, until golden and crisp (when it's ready, you'll be able to turn the cubes easily with a spatula). Add the soy sauce to the tofu and gently mix, then transfer to the asparagus bowl.

To assemble, divide the noodles between four bowls. Reheat the miso soup if you need to, and share among the bowls. Lay some tofu cubes on one side of each bowl, share out the asparagus and edamame evenly, and serve hot.

WHITE MISO RAMEN WITH TOFU AND ASPARAGUS

CLAY POT NOODLES with beetroot and smoked tofu

V

I've been to Bangkok a few times but never met clay pot noodles. My first encounter was in Soho, London, at a restaurant called Kiln. From the off, my mouth did not know what had hit it. It was as mind-altering as watching Disney's *Fantasia* as a seven-year-old. In my recipe, I've used smoked tofu slices, beetroot and walnuts to create some rich, almost meaty flavours and, as a bonus, the noodles turn pink. This is a special occasion or weekend dish as it requires a little more effort.

note / Smoked tofu and kecap manis can be found in bigger supermarkets or online; to make your own kecap manis, see page 256. The noodles you need here are glass noodles made from 100 per cent mung bean starch – they can be found in Chinese supermarkets or online. If you don't have a clay pot, a 24–28cm casserole dish will do. You'll also need a food processor for this recipe.

Serves 4 /

200g mung bean glass noodles
1 tbsp light soy sauce
1 red onion, chopped
1.5cm ginger, peeled
5 cloves of garlic, chopped

Soak the noodles in a large bowl of freshly boiled water until softened – about 10 minutes – then drain and dress with the tablespoon of light soy sauce. Put the onion, ginger and garlic into a food processor, and pulse to mince. Scrape out the

400g raw beetroot, peeled and roughly chopped

80g walnuts, plus 10g to garnish

20g fresh coriander

4 tbsp rapeseed oil

1 tsp salt

⅔ tsp ground black pepper

200g smoked tofu, very thinly sliced

4 spring onions, finely sliced

For the dressing /

2 tbsp light soy sauce

2 tbsp kecap manis

1 tbsp toasted sesame oil

250ml vegan vegetable stock

mixture (no need to wash the bowl), and repeat with the beetroot, walnuts and coriander stems.

Heat the rapeseed oil in a non-stick frying pan over a medium flame and, when hot, fry the minced onion paste for 10 minutes, stirring often so it doesn't catch, until it turns a couple of shades darker. Now add the beetroot mixture, cook for 15 minutes, add the salt and pepper, then cook for 5 minutes more, until deep, rich and soft, and turn off the heat.

Mix the ingredients for the dressing together, and set aside.

To build the noodle pot, place half the smoked tofu in the base in a single layer, followed by half the noodles (you might need to cut them with kitchen scissors). Top the noodles with two-thirds of the beetroot mixture, then add another layer each of the remaining tofu and noodles. Top with the remaining beetroot mixture.

Lightly chop the remaining walnuts and sprinkle over the top with the spring onions. Pour over the dressing, close the lid, put the pot on a medium heat and cook for 12 to 15 minutes. Remove the lid, garnish with chopped coriander leaves and serve.

CLAY POT NOODLES WITH BEETROOT AND SMOKED TOFU

SHIITAKE PHO with crispy leeks

V

There's a whole world of mushrooms out there but the diamond in the rough, in my eyes, is the shiitake. Originally from China, and now grown in the UK, it is sold both fresh and dried, and, when cooked, unleashes an almighty meaty, smoky richness, adding a welcome chewy texture to boot.

In this Hanoi-style pho, the mushroom broth provides a perfect pool for the noodles and spices – cinnamon, star anise and cloves – to swim in. You could top it with a galaxy of good things, from crispy fried onions to all manner of herbs (fresh mint and coriander, say), but here I've gone for leeks. This recipe rewards the cook who chops everything in advance.

Serves 4 /

4 tbsp rapeseed oil, plus extra for shallow-frying
4 banana shallots, thinly sliced
5cm ginger, peeled and grated
1 star anise
3 cloves
1 cinnamon stick
2 leeks: 1 sliced, 1 shredded into long strips
2 bird's-eye chillies, very finely chopped

In a large pot (3 litres or bigger), heat the oil on a medium flame, then fry the shallots for 5 minutes. Stir in the ginger, star anise, cloves and cinnamon stick, and fry for 5 minutes more, until the mix starts to blacken and turn sticky. Add the finely sliced leek, chillies and mushrooms, and stir-fry for 8 to 10 minutes, until softened, then add the soy sauce, half the spring onions and the stock. Bring to the boil, turn the heat down to a whisper and leave to simmer. Check for seasoning: it may well need salt.

Meanwhile, fry the shredded leek. Pour enough oil into a frying pan to come 1cm up the sides, then

375g fresh shiitake mushrooms, thinly sliced
1 tbsp light soy sauce
6 spring onions, very finely sliced
2 litres vegan vegetable stock
optional: salt
200g flat rice noodles
a big handful of fresh coriander leaves, shredded
1 lime, quartered

heat on a medium flame until very hot. Fry the leek in batches, until crispy and golden, then use a slotted spoon to transfer to a plate lined with kitchen paper to drain while you fry the rest. Cook the noodles according to the packet instructions and drain.

To serve, distribute the noodles between four bowls, ladle the broth on top, making sure everyone gets a good helping of the vegetables, then scatter with coriander, the crispy leeks, remaining spring onions and a squeeze of lime.

SHIITAKE PHO WITH CRISPY LEEKS

UDON NOODLES with red cabbage and cauliflower

V

Chewy, fat and wonderfully slurp-able, udon noodles are my favourite. They're deliciously bouncy and quick to cook, especially the 'wok ready' sort. In Japan, they are often added to hot soups, but I've never managed to work out the bowl-to-mouth manoeuvre without ruining a perfectly good top. I like them best yaki-style: stir-fried with a party of vegetables, and in this instance spiced with curry powder and spiked with lime.

note / Roasting the cabbage brings out its delicious, bitter, caramel notes. The Japanese pink pickled ginger called 'beni shoga' is available online, or you can make your own pickled (non-pink) ginger (see page 255).

Serves 4 /

1 small red cabbage (500g), cut into 2cm wedges
1 small cauliflower (500g), cut into 4cm florets
rapeseed oil
4 tbsp light soy sauce
8–10 spring onions, sliced diagonally into 4cm pieces
2 cloves of garlic, crushed

Preheat the oven to 220°C fan/240°C/475°F/gas 9.

Put the cabbage on one oven tray and the cauliflower on another, making sure the latter is in a single layer, so it doesn't steam. In a small bowl, mix 2 tablespoons each of oil and soy sauce, then pour over the cauliflower and cabbage. Pop both trays into the oven. Roast the cauliflower for 15 minutes, until just tender and blackening, then remove. Roast the cabbage for 20 minutes longer, until burned at the edges but still holding its shape.

600g 'straight to wok' udon noodles
1 tsp curry powder
2 tbsp mirin
2 tbsp lime juice (from 1½ limes)

To serve /

20g Japanese pink pickled 'beni shoga' ginger
white sesame seeds

Heat 2 tablespoons of oil in a large non-stick frying pan on a medium-high flame. Add the spring onions and fry for 2 minutes, until starting to brown but still bright green. Add the garlic and cook for a minute more, stirring occasionally so it doesn't burn.

Add the noodles, toss to coat in the garlicky oil and spring onions, then stir in the curry powder and mirin, and cook for a minute. Add the cabbage and cauliflower and cook for 2 minutes, until the noodles take on a little colour. Add the remaining 2 tablespoons of soy and the lime juice, and toss to coat.

Transfer to four plates or bowls, and sprinkle with the pickled ginger and sesame seeds.

UDON NOODLES WITH RED CABBAGE AND CAULIFLOWER

SPRING ONION AND GINGER NOODLES

V

Spring onion and ginger are a power couple in the world of ingredients. Although they are ubiquitous throughout much Chinese and Korean cooking, I hadn't understood their transformational power until I started thumbing through David Chang's book *Momofuku*, and came across this spring onion and ginger sauce. My discovery has since turned into an addiction and this combination features a little too much in this book – I'm sorry but I blame David.

note / The sauce keeps for a week in the fridge and can be used on almost anything.

Serves 4 /

- **14 spring onions (250g),** very finely chopped
- **4cm ginger,** peeled and very finely chopped
- **6 tbsp rapeseed oil**
- **2½ tsp soy sauce**
- **2 tsp white wine vinegar**
- **¾ tsp salt**
- **400g wholewheat noodles**
- **1 tbsp black sesame seeds**

Put all the ingredients except for the noodles and sesame seeds into a large bowl and mix together.

Get a medium-sized pan of water up to a rolling boil and, when bubbling, pop in the noodles. Cook for around 3 to 5 minutes, or according to the packet instructions, then drain well, tip into the spring onion and ginger sauce and mix.

Distribute between four bowls, sprinkle over the sesame seeds and serve.

PISTACHIO, PEA AND MINT SOBA NOODLES

V

A real 'welcome to summer dish'. All the freshness and lightness that hot weather demands, but with enough in there to keep tummies full.

note / I like to use soba noodles made from buckwheat and wheat as they're easier to handle, but you could use 100 per cent buckwheat soba if you prefer. You'll need a food processor for this recipe.

Serves 2 /

50g pistachio kernels
1 bird's-eye chilli, finely chopped
2 cloves of garlic, finely chopped
300g frozen petit pois, defrosted
25g fresh mint, leaves picked
3 tbsp lime juice (from 2 limes)
3½ tbsp toasted sesame oil
1⅓ tsp salt
200g soba noodles
120g mangetout
100g watercress, tough stems removed, chopped

Place the pistachios, chilli and garlic into a food processor (using the normal blade) and process until the pistachios have broken down. Add the peas, mint, lime juice, 3 tablespoons of sesame oil and the salt, and pulse a few times (don't blend, you don't want soup).

Bring a large saucepan of water to the boil and, when bubbling, drop the soba noodles in. Stir so the noodles don't clump together, and boil according to the packet instructions, around 4 to 5 minutes. Drain, refresh briefly under cold water, and set to drain in a sieve over a bowl. Drizzle with the remaining ½ tablespoon of sesame oil, and coat with your fingers to make sure they don't stick.

Set the same saucepan over a low heat and put a couple of table-spoons of water into the pan. When

hot, add the mangetout. Stir-fry for 2 minutes, then add the watercress. Stir-fry for a minute until it wilts, then take the pan off the heat.

Place the noodles in a mixing bowl, and add the pea mixture, mangetout and watercress. Mix with your hands and taste for seasoning, adjusting as you see fit, then tip on to a plate to serve.

CARAMELIZED ONION AND CHILLI RAMEN

VO

From the outside, Japanese food can seem rigid, steeped in centuries of tradition. But the truth is that it is a story of continual innovation. Ramen, for example, is an adaptation of Chinese wheat noodles and was first introduced to Japan by Chinese immigrants in the early twentieth century. And although there is only one name to describe this soupy noodle dish, there are as many variations of ramen as there are cooks in Japan. My recipe evolved from an unlikely place, taking inspiration from a French onion soup I ate in a cafe in Paris. In my recipe, sticky onions combine with miso, stock and sake to make a very special-tasting soup.

note / Cooking sake is available in big supermarkets and online. If you can't find it, use Chinese rice wine or dry sherry instead. To veganize this dish, drop the eggs and ensure the stock is suitable for vegans.

Serves 4 /

rapeseed oil
3 large brown onions (500g), finely sliced
3 cloves of garlic, finely sliced
½ tsp salt
1 bird's-eye chilli, finely sliced
1½ litres vegetable stock
2 tbsp cooking sake
1½ tbsp light soy sauce
1 tbsp brown rice miso
200g ramen noodles
200g choi sum, cut into 6cm pieces
optional: 4 soy eggs (see page 37) or soft-boiled eggs
optional: chilli oil, to serve

In a large, heavy-bottomed saucepan, warm 5 tablespoons of oil over a medium heat. Add the onions, garlic and salt, stir to coat in the oil, and cook for 8 to 10 minutes, until the onions become translucent. Reduce the heat to its lowest setting and continue to cook for 30 minutes, stirring every 5 minutes. The onions will gradually caramelize and colour, eventually breaking down to form a soft, sweet paste. Add the bird's-eye chilli and stock, bring to boil, then reduce the heat to a simmer and add the sake, soy sauce and brown rice miso, stirring well to combine. Check the seasoning and adjust if need be.

Cook your noodles according to the packet instructions. Refresh in cold water and stir in a little oil to keep them from sticking together. Finally, bring the broth back to the boil, add the choi sum and cook for 1 to 2 minutes, until tender.

To serve, divide your noodles between four bowls and ladle the broth and greens over the noodles. If you're serving the eggs, halve and pop on top of the bowls, and serve with some chilli oil if you like.

CARAMELIZED ONION AND CHILLI RAMEN

FOOD COURT SINGAPORE NOODLES

V

I've been eating Singapore noodles in airport and shopping-mall food courts for years now. They tend to be overcooked and served in a neon oil slick. These noodles are different: spikier in flavour and packed with vegetables.

As with all pan-fried noodle dishes, there are secrets to success. Be sure to prep your ingredients in advance, before you even touch a frying pan. Cook the noodles for a minute less than the packet instructions and mix gently to distribute the vegetables through the noodles. Arm yourself with a spaghetti fork or a pair of salad servers and you'll be all right.

note / How long you soak the noodles for will depend on the brand, as they vary. I like Thai Taste noodles.

Serves 2 /

150g rice vermicelli noodles
3 tbsp vegetable oil
1 red onion, thinly sliced
3 cloves of garlic, crushed
2cm ginger, peeled and grated
1 green finger chilli, chopped

Fill and boil the kettle. Place the dried noodles in a large heatproof bowl, cover with boiled water and leave to soften for a minute less than the packet instructions specify (it should take 4 to 7 minutes). Drain, refresh under cold running water, drain again and drizzle with 1 tablespoon of oil to prevent sticking.

Heat the remaining 2 tablespoons of oil in a large frying pan on a high heat and add the onion, garlic,

2 peppers (1 red, 1 yellow), thinly sliced
1 large carrot (150g), peeled and julienned
a handful of bean sprouts
a handful of green beans, cut lengthways
1 tsp medium curry powder
3 tbsp light soy sauce
optional: ½ tsp salt

ginger and chilli. Cook for around 5 minutes, stirring regularly so the ginger and garlic don't burn.

Next, add the rest of the vegetables. Cook for 5 minutes, stirring regularly, until all the veg has wilted – this is a comfort dish so you're not really looking for crunch. Finally, add the curry powder, soy sauce and noodles. Add the salt if need be. Mix well but carefully, until all the noodles are coated and the vegetables are evenly distributed. Serve immediately.

FOOD COURT SINGAPORE NOODLES

curries

Try to define 'curry' and you can't. It is not bound by a technique, or a specific set of ingredients; neither is it limited to certain regions or countries. It's loosely understood to be something cooked in a spiced sauce.

For me, what is more interesting is how the 'curry' has travelled, and been interpreted and adapted. Madhur Jaffrey, author of *Ultimate Curry Bible*, is sure that the ribbon of tradition that runs through all curries can be traced back to India. She suggests that when Indian migrants moved out of India, both east and west, as labourers of the British Empire, they took their cooking with them.

It makes sense, then, to start our journey in India. Punjab, in the north of India, is where dairy-loving fiends created India's most popular cheese, paneer. Spinach and paneer is the traditional combination, but in this chapter I've teamed the cheese with kale (see page 124), which grows in my native county, Lincolnshire, in the kind of plumes you might find on a dancing girl's headdress. In this curry, the kale has been blitzed to smithereens and braised in spiced tomatoes until soft.

The north of India is also where you'll find paneer kofta (see page 115): little dumplings made using potatoes and grated paneer. Ordinarily they are deep-fried then served in a rich, creamy sauce, but mine are pan-fried and dished up in a tomato sauce thickened with a handful of cashews.

Moving down the west coast, the next stop is Mysore, the city that smells of sandalwood and yoga mats. This is where I ate my first saagu, a Karnatakan curry thick with coconut and spices. Mine, on

page 123, is made with floury potatoes, chard and coconut, which happily merge into a sauce.

Hop over the border into the state of Kerala and you'll find mild vegetable istoos: vegetables cooked in a ginger, chilli and coconut sauce. While these dishes are not as complex as some curries, they are gentle and elegant, and crucially they don't compromise on flavour (see page 112 for my Jersey Royal and green bean istoo).

From Kerala, take a dog-leg turn right into Tamil Nadu. Between ancient carved temples and silk sari shops, you'll find restaurants serving thakkali kuzhambu, the dish on which my tomato curry (see page 108) is based. In it, pickling spices like mustard, fennel and cumin seeds come together with tamarind and coconut to form a rich, silken, lip-smacking mass of tomatoes, perfect to scoop up with naan bread.

Sail a few miles across the Arabian Sea to Sri Lanka, and order rice and curry for lunch. Although 'curry' is singular, here you'll receive a selection of curries each made from one main ingredient, such as beetroot, aubergine, pumpkin or cashew, served alongside a coconut dal (parippu) and perhaps a mallum, a sprightly green dish. See my beetroot curry with green bean mallum on page 100.

Leave Sri Lanka and travel east to Thailand where David Thompson, author of the masterpiece *Thai Food*, says that 'everyone has a favourite curry'. Thompson suggests the curries of the north and central plains (like Thai green curry – see page 120) use more spices because they've been influenced by Indians, while the curries of the south (like massaman curry – see page 114) have been influenced by Muslims and are redolent of cardamom and cumin.

Our last and final stop on this curry journey is Japan, a country with a strong and very different culinary history. Curry became 'Japanized' soon after being introduced – not directly by Indians, it would appear, but by British officers. No wonder, then, that the katsu curry bears little resemblance to anything I've eaten in India or elsewhere

in the world, though this naturally sweet, spicy rich sauce has its own magical charm. My version on page 105 is the recipe I make double quantities of, and stow away in the freezer to use on a lazy night.

Recipe List

SRI LANKAN BEETROOT CURRY with green bean mallum

LEEK, MUSHROOM AND KALE SUBJI

AUBERGINE KATSU CURRY with pickled radishes

PUMPKIN MALAI KARI

TOMATO CURRY

ROASTED PANEER ALOO GOBI

JERSEY ROYAL AND GREEN BEAN ISTOO

SWEET POTATO AND AUBERGINE MASSAMAN CURRY

PANEER KOFTA with a tomato and cashew sauce

AUBERGINE POLLICHATTU

THAI GREEN CURRY with aubergines, courgettes and mangetout

NEW POTATO, CHARD AND COCONUT CURRY

PANEER, TOMATO AND KALE SAAG

SRI LANKAN BEETROOT CURRY with green bean mallum

V

The greatest souvenir you can take home from Sri Lanka is a love for 'rice and curry'. Order this for lunch and you'll get a smorgasbord of curries: leek, cashew, beetroot, jackfruit, pumpkin and even pineapple. Often, they are heavily spiced with cinnamon, fenugreek, chilli and pepper, then smothered in coconut milk to soften the blow. On the side, you can expect the most fantastic little meal-brighteners, from raw relishes (sambols) made with chilli, lime and coconut, to quickly cooked greens (mallum) and crisp poppadoms. It is one of life's great feasts. This recipe is an introduction to the tradition.

note / Don't let beetroot's oozing pinkness bully you: just rub a piece of cut potato on to pink fingers, and most stains will disappear.

Serves 4 as a main /

For the curry /

- **3 tbsp rapeseed oil**
- **6 fresh curry leaves**
- **1 large red onion,** diced
- **4 cloves of garlic,** crushed
- **1½ green finger chillies,** finely chopped
- **1½ tbsp tomato puree**
- **2 tsp ground cumin**

Start with the beetroot curry. On a medium flame, heat the oil in a wide frying pan for which you have a lid, then fry the curry leaves and leave them to crackle and pop for a minute. Stir in the onion, garlic and chillies, cook for around 6 minutes, until the onion turns translucent and soft, then add the tomato puree and cumin, and cook for another 5 minutes.

Add the beetroot, salt and 6 tablespoons of water, pop on the lid and cook for 15 minutes, stirring

800g raw beetroot, peeled and cut into 0.5cm slices

1¼ tsp salt

1 x 400ml tin of coconut milk

1 tbsp lime juice (from 1 lime)

For the green beans /

1 tbsp rapeseed oil

300g green beans, topped, tailed and cut into 1.5cm pieces

1 clove of garlic, crushed

½ a green finger chilli, very finely chopped

1 tbsp lime juice (from 1 lime)

1/3 tsp salt

3½ tbsp desiccated coconut

occasionally; if the curry looks a bit dry, add more water, a tablespoon at a time. Take off the lid, stir in the coconut milk and simmer for 10 minutes, until the beetroot is tender and the sauce has reduced. Finally, stir in the lime juice and turn off the heat while you get on with the beans.

In another wide frying pan, heat the oil for the beans on a high flame. Once it's hot, add the beans, stir to coat in the oil, then leave for 3 to 4 minutes, stirring once, until they blister and char. When the beans have got some blackened bits on them, but are still bright green in colour, stir in the garlic, chilli, lime juice and salt, and cook for a minute. Finally, add the desiccated coconut, stir-fry for a minute, then take off the heat.

SRI LANKAN BEETROOT CURRY WITH GREEN BEAN MALLUM

LEEK, MUSHROOM AND KALE SUBJI

V

One of the first lessons I learned in my mother's kitchen was not to waste anything, including the lonely old vegetables at the bottom of the fridge drawer. Even now, years later, Hugh and I take it in turns to breathe new life into whatever's lurking in the fridge in a game we call 'fridge bingo'. That is how this little subji, an Indian 'stir-fry', came about. In it, the sweetness of the leeks, fennel seeds and peas is grounded and balanced by the earthy mushrooms and kale and cumin seeds. As with nearly all subjis, chapattis and a dollop of (non-dairy) yoghurt make for good company.

Serves 4 as a main /

1 tsp cumin seeds
1 tsp fennel seeds
3 tbsp rapeseed oil
1 tsp black mustard seeds
1 onion, finely chopped
3 cloves of garlic, finely chopped
3 leeks (500g), trimmed and finely sliced
600g chestnut mushrooms, quartered
1¾ tsp Kashmiri chilli powder
½ tsp ground turmeric
1¼ tsp salt

Put the cumin and fennel seeds into a mortar, and bash until they're fairly well ground.

Heat the oil in a large frying pan for which you have a lid, then add the ground spices and the mustard seeds and stir-fry for a minute, until the cumin turns a shade darker. Add the onion and cook, stirring often, for around 6 minutes, or until soft, then add the garlic and cook for 2 minutes more.

Add the leeks and cook for around 5 minutes, until they've softened and unravelled, then add the mushrooms. It will seem as if there are too many to fit into the pan, but they will soon cook down.

200g kale, ribs discarded, leaves chopped

150g frozen peas, defrosted

After 5 minutes, when the mushrooms are juicy, add the chilli powder, turmeric and salt, then stir in the kale and cook for 8 minutes, until tender. Throw in the peas and cook for 2 or 3 minutes more, until they are hot and soft.

Check the subji for chilli and salt, adjust to taste, and serve.

LEEK, MUSHROOM AND KALE SUBJI

AUBERGINE KATSU CURRY with pickled radishes

V

Katsu curry is an unlikely-looking thief of the heart, but this mysterious brown concoction is one of Japan's favourite dishes. In my take on it, the curry sauce is made using plenty of naturally sweet vegetables plus a couple of store-cupboard essentials. These modest ingredients come together to form a seductive and silky sauce much greater than the sum of its parts. It's a message to us all never to judge a dish by its colour.

note / The sauce freezes well, so feel free to double up when making. You'll need a blender for this recipe.

Serves 4 as a main /

For the radishes /

100g radishes, trimmed and finely sliced
½ tsp salt
3 tbsp mirin
3 tbsp white wine vinegar

For the curry /

3 tbsp rapeseed oil
1 onion, chopped
2 medium carrots (200g), peeled and finely diced
1 sweet potato (200g), peeled and finely

Preheat the oven to 180°C fan/200°C/400°F/gas 6. Put the radishes into a heatproof bowl, cover with 100ml of just-boiled water, and add the salt, mirin and vinegar. Stir and leave to cool.

To make the sauce, heat the oil in a lidded frying pan, then fry the onion, carrots and sweet potato for 10 minutes. Add the garlic and ginger, fry for 2 minutes more, cover and leave to steam through for 5 minutes. Add the curry powder, mix, then stir in 2 tablespoons of flour until the vegetables are coated. Add the stock little by little, then bring to the boil. Add the soy sauce, ketchup and ½ teaspoon of salt, then take off the heat. Blend smooth, then return the sauce to the pan.

diced
4 cloves of garlic, sliced
1.5cm ginger, peeled and grated
2 tbsp curry powder
10 tbsp plain flour
500ml vegan vegetable stock
2 tbsp light soy sauce
2 tbsp tomato ketchup
salt
2 aubergines (600g), cut lengthways into 0.5cm-thick slices
200g panko breadcrumbs

Line an oven tray with baking paper. Put the aubergines on a plate. Put 8 tablespoons of flour on a second, lipped plate, then slowly mix the flour with 180ml of water and ½ teaspoon of salt to make a thin paste. Put the panko on a third plate. Cover both sides of each aubergine slice in the flour paste, shaking off any excess, then press into the panko to coat. Lay the coated slices on the prepared tray and drizzle both sides with oil. Bake for 15 minutes on each side, turn the heat up to 220°C fan/240°C/475°F/gas 9 and cook for 10 minutes more, until crisp, then take out of the oven.

Just before serving, gently reheat the curry sauce for 5 minutes, adding more water and salt if need be. Put 3 or 4 aubergine slices on each plate, alongside the sauce, then serve with some drained pickled radish, rice, salad leaves and a sprinkling of black sesame seeds if you like.

AUBERGINE KATSU CURRY WITH PICKLED RADISHES

PUMPKIN MALAI KARI

V

Once upon a time, pumpkins were the preserve of fairy tales and Halloween. They were admired for their ability to make great props, not for their ability to make great dishes. Today, things are different. Varieties such as Crown Prince and Delica grace farmers' markets, and their nutty, honey flavours make them a powerful weapon for the home cook.

I have loosely based this recipe on the Bengali malai kari, a dish made with sweet onions, garam masala and rich coconut milk. Warming, hearty and sharpened with a little lime for freshness, it's best eaten with rice or scooped on to the softest naan you can find.

note / If you can't get hold of a good pumpkin, use butternut squash.

Serves 4 as a main /

1.2kg pumpkin, such as Delica
rapeseed oil
salt
2 large red onions, finely chopped
2cm ginger, peeled and finely grated
5 cloves of garlic, crushed
200ml tomato passata

Preheat the oven to 180°C fan/200°C/400°F/gas 6 and line two baking trays with baking paper or foil.

Without peeling, cut the pumpkin in half, scoop out and discard the seeds, and cut the flesh into thin crescents, no more than 2cm wide. Drizzle with oil, sprinkle with a big pinch of salt, then pop them on the trays in one layer. Bake for 30 to 40 minutes, turning the pumpkin halfway through, until tender and blackening at the edges.

2 tsp ground cumin
¾ tsp ground cinnamon
1¾ tsp Kashmiri chilli powder
1½ tsp garam masala
1 tsp caster sugar
600ml coconut milk (1½ tins)
1 lime, cut into wedges
optional: toasted flaked almonds or fresh coriander, to serve

Heat 4 tablespoons of oil in a deep frying pan over a medium flame and, when hot, add the onions. Cook for 15 minutes until really soft, then add the ginger and garlic. Cook for 3 to 4 minutes, then add the tomato and cook for a further 6 minutes, until rich and paste-like. Add 1½ teaspoons of salt, the spices and the teaspoon of sugar, stir to mix, then add the coconut milk. Mix well and heat through until it's thick and bubbling. Taste, squeeze in a little lime and taste again, adjusting the salt, sugar or lime juice as you wish.

To serve, pour the sauce on to each plate, and top with a few wedges of pumpkin. Sprinkle over some toasted almonds or fresh coriander if you like, and serve with naan bread or rice.

PUMPKIN MALAI KARI

TOMATO CURRY

V

There are just a few Indian dishes that truly celebrate the tomato, such as Keralan tomato fry and Gujarati sev tameta nu shaak (a sweet and sour tomato curry), but it's thakkali kuzhambu, from Tamil Nadu, on which this recipe is (very) loosely based. The sweetness and acidity of tomatoes is married to classic pickling spices, then tempered with curry leaves, tamarind and coconut: the ingredients that define South Indian cooking. This dish has a magic moment when all the water in the coconut milk evaporates to render the oil, leaving you with a silky, luxurious heap of deliciousness that's perfect for scooping up with naan bread or mixing into hot rice.

note / You'll need two large frying pans for this recipe.

Serves 4 as a main /

- **1¼ tsp fennel seeds**
- **1¼ tsp black mustard seeds**
- **1¼ tsp cumin seeds**
- **1¼ tsp coriander seeds**
- **rapeseed oil**
- **2 onions,** halved and finely sliced
- **1¼ tsp salt**
- **8 fresh curry leaves,** plus extra to garnish if you like

Heat a large frying pan on a medium flame and, when hot, toast the fennel, mustard, cumin and coriander seeds for a minute or two, shaking the pan every few seconds, until the coriander seeds turn golden (coriander always takes first). Tip the seeds into a mortar and bash until fairly well ground.

Heat 4 tablespoons of oil in the same pan and, when hot, return the ground spices with the onions, salt and curry leaves. Fry for 10 to 12 minutes, until the onions are golden and crisp-edged. Meanwhile,

1.2 kg tomatoes (ideally 1kg vine and 200g yellow baby plum)
1½ green finger chillies, very finely chopped
4 cloves of garlic, crushed
2½ tsp tamarind paste
1 x 400ml tin of coconut milk

cut the vine tomatoes into eighths and the baby tomatoes in half.

Add the chillies and garlic to the pan and cook, stirring, for 2 minutes. Then add the tamarind and coconut milk, stir, and transfer half the mixture into your second large frying pan.

Divide the tomatoes between both pans, so they sit in one layer. Set both pans on a medium heat and cook for 20 to 25 minutes without stirring: you want the tomatoes to keep their shape while driving off the water in the coconut milk. You'll know there's none left when you can see oil at the sides of the pan. (The curry won't be dry: the tomatoes contain a lot of juice, which will come out while they're resting.) Now tip the contents of the second pan gently back into the first.

If you'd like to add a final bit of pizazz, heat a little oil in a saucepan and, when hot, drop in a handful of extra curry leaves. Let them crackle and crisp, then take off the heat and pour over the tomatoes. Serve with naan or rice.

TOMATO CURRY

ROASTED PANEER ALOO GOBI

This was an experiment in the early days of parenthood to see if a curry could be cooked in the oven. In short: it can. But I learned that roasting spices can be challenging, as the dry heat often burns them or dulls the flavours. One way to counter this is to increase the amount of spice you use and add them to a wet sauce, so they don't frazzle away. The second is to wake up the spices after cooking with a little lemon juice.

Serves 4 (or 2, two nights running) /

- **100ml rapeseed oil**
- **2½ tsp ground coriander**
- **2½ tsp ground cumin**
- **2 tsp Kashmiri chilli powder**
- **½ tsp garam masala**
- **1½ tsp salt**
- **4 cloves of garlic,** crushed
- **2cm ginger,** peeled and grated
- **2 red onions,** halved and cut into 1cm wedges
- **225g paneer,** cut into 2cm cubes
- **1 medium cauliflower (600g),** broken into florets
- **300g potatoes,** peeled and cut into 2cm cubes

Preheat the oven to 180°C fan/200°C/400°F/gas 6 and line two large oven trays with foil.

Next, make the marinade. In a small bowl mix the oil, ground coriander, cumin, chilli powder, garam masala, salt, garlic and ginger, and set aside.

Place the onions and paneer on one tray, and the cauliflower and potatoes on the other. Pour an equal amount of the dressing over both trays, making sure you scrape every last bit out of the bowl, and rub everything with your hands, making sure all the vegetables are covered. Place the onion and paneer tray at the top of the oven, and the cauliflower in the middle. Roast for 25 minutes, or until the cauliflower and potatoes are tender and blackening, then remove both trays. Cover the cauliflower and potato tray with foil to keep warm.

Add the chopped tomatoes to the onion and paneer tray and return to the oven for another 15 minutes.

500g vine tomatoes, roughly chopped

chopped fresh coriander and lemon wedges, to serve

After this time, remove from the oven and tip the potatoes and cauliflower into the tomato tray, gently mix, and taste, adding a little more salt if you like.

Sprinkle with chopped coriander, squeeze over the lemon, and serve alongside yoghurt and naan breads.

ROASTED PANEER ALOO GOBI

JERSEY ROYAL AND GREEN BEAN ISTOO

V

Black pepper, once a highly prized spice for which kingdoms fell and men died, originates in India's Malabar coast, where it's one of the main spices of the local cuisine. When used as more than just a seasoning, as in this istoo (a corruption of 'stew'), pepper adds a gentle heat, unlike the sharp hit you get from fresh chillies. The result is one of the most elegant curries I've come across in all my travels across India.

This curry is a variation on one in my book *Fresh India*, and really begs to be served with sweet, roasted tamarind shallots (see page 244), which can be cooked in the oven at the same time as the istoo. If you've no time or inclination to make the shallots, an invigorating aubergine (brinjal) pickle would do nicely.

Serves 4 as part of a bigger spread /

2 tbsp rapeseed oil
10 fresh curry leaves
4cm cinnamon stick, broken in two
1 medium brown onion, sliced
2cm ginger, peeled and finely grated
4 cloves of garlic, crushed

In a casserole dish for which you have a lid, heat the oil for the istoo on a medium flame and, once hot, add the curry leaves, cinnamon stick and onion. Cook for 8 to 10 minutes, until the onion is as soft as possible without colouring, then stir in the ginger, garlic and chilli, and cook for 2 minutes.

Add the potatoes, salt and pepper, stir in the coconut milk, then fill the empty tin with 100ml of water, swirl it around and add to the casserole –

1 green finger chilli, slit

650g small Jersey Royal potatoes, quartered

1 tsp each salt and ground black pepper

1 x 400ml tin of coconut milk

250g green beans, tailed and halved

you want just to cover the potatoes, so add more water, if need be. Bring to the boil on a medium heat, then turn the heat down and simmer for 10 minutes.

Add the beans, cover with the lid and simmer until both the beans and potatoes are tender – around 5 to 6 minutes (longer, if you prefer your beans soft).

Serve with hot basmati rice, or, if you're able to find them in an Indian shop, fermented coconut appam pancakes.

JERSEY ROYAL AND GREEN BEAN ISTOO

SWEET POTATO AND AUBERGINE MASSAMAN CURRY

V

Growing up, 'something from the cupboard' became a regular and comforting option – especially in deep winter, when going out to buy something fresh meant de-icing our old Nissan Bluebird that was so full of holes, the eye-stinging wind would freeze our fingers blue. We spent a lot of time with our noses in the kitchen drawers, wondering how best to use tins of this and that. These days, I have a more global pantry and it is as easy to whip up a spaghetti as it is this massaman curry. A massaman curry has many variations, but it's usually sweet, sour with tamarind and made using spices, peanuts and coconut; it also often features a starchy vegetable such as potato or sweet potato. Though ordinarily it's complex to make, I've taken liberties by using as many store-cupboard ingredients as possible.

note / You'll need a blender for this recipe.

Serves 4 /

For the paste /

5 bird's-eye chillies
4 shallots, roughly chopped
2 lemongrass sticks, bases only, roughly chopped

Put all the ingredients for the paste into a blender, reserving a handful of coriander leaves to garnish the finished dish. Add 100ml of water and blitz.

Put a large pan for which you have a lid on a medium heat and, once hot, fry the paste, stirring constantly, for 5 minutes, until dark and glossy; take care it doesn't catch and burn. Add the coconut milk

40g fresh coriander, leaves picked, stems roughly chopped
100g (4½ tbsp) smooth peanut butter
1½ tsp ground cumin
¾ tsp ground cinnamon
½ tsp ground cloves
1½ tbsp galangal paste
1½ tbsp tamarind paste
2½ tsp sugar
1½ tsp salt

For the curry /
2 x 400ml tins of coconut milk
1 large aubergine (400g), cut into 2cm x 2cm chunks
800g sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into 3cm x 3cm chunks
a handful of dried coconut slices, to garnish

little by little, stirring it in as you go, then throw in the aubergine and bring the lot up to a bubble. Add the sweet potatoes, cover the pan, turn the heat down to a whisper and leave to cook for 20 minutes, until the aubergine has collapsed and the sweet potato is very tender.

While the curry is cooking, toast the coconut slices. Put a small frying pan on a medium flame and, once hot, toast the coconut for a couple of minutes, until golden brown on both sides.

To serve, transfer the curry to a serving bowl, scatter the reserved coriander leaves and coconut slices on top, and serve with plain rice.

PANEER KOFTA with a tomato and cashew sauce

When friends travel to India, they come back and ask me for a recipe for this dish, also known as malai kofta. The kofta are compact little balls of joy made from paneer and potato, spiced with pepper, chilli and ginger. They are lovely by themselves or submerged in a warm hug of a sauce made from tomatoes and sweet creamy cashews.

note / Kasuri methi are dried fenugreek leaves that add a pungent earthy flavour. They're found in boxes in large supermarkets or Asian supermarkets. You'll need a blender for this recipe.

Serves 4 as a main /

For the tomato and cashew sauce /

50g unsalted cashews
3 tbsp rapeseed oil
1 large onion, chopped
4 cloves of garlic, crushed
2 x 400g tins of chopped tomatoes
1½ tsp Kashmiri chilli powder
1 tsp garam masala
½ tsp ground cinnamon
1 tsp salt
optional: 1 tsp kasuri methi, plus more to decorate

For the kofta /

400g Maris Piper potatoes, peeled, boiled and cooled
225g paneer, grated
1 green finger chilli, finely chopped
1.5cm ginger, peeled and grated
1 tsp ground black pepper
1 tsp salt
rapeseed oil

First, make the tomato and cashew sauce. Place the cashews in a small heatproof bowl, pour over just-boiled water to cover, and leave to soak for 10 minutes. Drain, then blend the cashews into a paste with 5 tablespoons of water (add a little extra water if needed).

Put the oil into a frying pan over a medium heat and, when hot, add the onion. Cook for 10 minutes, until soft, then add the garlic. Cook for 2 minutes, then add the chopped tomatoes and all their juices to the pan, mix well, and leave to cook for 10 minutes, until the tomatoes turn paste-like and start to release oil back into the pan. Add the chilli powder, garam masala, cinnamon, salt and the cashew paste to the pan, along with the kasuri methi if using. Cook for a further 5 minutes, loosening with water if need be to make the consistency saucier, then take off the heat while you make the kofta.

Grate the cooled boiled potatoes and add to a bowl with the paneer, green chilli, ginger, pepper and salt. Mix well with your hands and form into 12 patties (2cm thick by 5cm wide). Put 2 tablespoons of oil into a frying pan and, when hot, fry the patties in batches for 2 minutes on each side until a golden crust has formed, then remove to a plate.

Once all the koftas are ready, heat up the sauce and pop the koftas in to warm up. Sprinkle over some more kasuri methi if using, and serve hot with naan bread.

AUBERGINE POLLICHATTU

V

Indian food has a north–south divide. While food from the north is (in general) slow, heavy and often a shade of red or brown, food from the south is faster, fresher and more brightly flavoured. It's long been a mystery to me why food from the north has tended to dominate our high streets. This Keralan dish, traditionally cooked in a banana leaf, is a wonderful introduction to the food of South India. Wrapping the aubergine in baking paper part bakes and part steams it, making it wonderfully creamy and soft. This means a crunchy salad would sit nicely alongside.

note / You'll need four sheets of baking paper cut into 40cm squares and kitchen string or regular string soaked in cold water.

Serves 4 as a main /

3 tbsp coconut oil
20 fresh curry leaves
5 large shallots (400g), finely sliced
5 cloves of garlic, finely sliced
3cm ginger, peeled and grated
2 green finger chillies, finely chopped
400g ripe vine tomatoes, roughly chopped

Preheat the oven to 200°C fan/220°C/425°F/gas 7.

Heat the coconut oil in a large frying pan over a medium flame, then add the curry leaves and leave them to crackle and crisp for a minute. Add the shallots and cook for 8 minutes, until they are translucent and just starting to brown, then add the garlic, ginger and chillies. Cook for 3 or 4 minutes, until the scent of garlic and ginger has filled the kitchen, then add the tomatoes. Cook for 4 minutes, until the tomatoes have broken down, then add the tamarind paste, coconut cream, turmeric and salt.

3 tsp tamarind paste
100ml coconut cream
½ tsp ground turmeric
1 tsp salt
3 medium aubergines (900g)

Simmer together for 15 minutes, until you have a deep ochre sauce that is thick enough to spread (i.e. not too runny). Take off the heat and leave to cool.

Remove the stems from the aubergines and cut lengthways into 1cm-thick slices, to get 16 slices if you can, then separate the aubergine slices into 4 portions. Roughly divide the sauce in the pan into 4 portions, too.

Put a slice of aubergine in the middle of each piece of baking paper, add a spoonful of sauce, and add another slice. Repeat until you have a four-slice sandwich. Bring the baking paper up at either side of the aubergine and fold it over so the aubergine is encased. Do the same with the ends, so that you have a neat parcel. Tie with string so that it looks like a present. Put this parcel on a baking sheet and repeat with the rest of your aubergine portions until you have 4 identical parcels. Put these in the oven and cook for 45 minutes, then serve with a chopped salad and some naan or flatbread.

AUBERGINE POLLICHATTU

THAI GREEN CURRY with aubergines, courgettes and mangetout

V

Thai restaurants have long set up shop in some of my favourite pubs in London. This phenomenon started in the mid 1980s at the Churchill Arms in Kensington, and many other pubs soon followed suit. As a result, the Thai green curry has been with me through thick and thin since I moved to London in my twenties. Through birthdays and break-ups, it has helped to bolster proceedings and to soften blows. It strikes a perfect balance of fresh green chilli heat and sweet, calm coconut, and in my eyes has no other competitor for comfort.

note / I've used both broccoli and mangetout here, but you could just use one. You'll need a blender for this recipe.

Serves 4 as a main /

For the paste /

4 green finger chillies, roughly chopped
3 lemongrass sticks, tough leaves discarded, roughly chopped
4 fat cloves of garlic, roughly chopped
1½ tbsp galangal paste, drained
2cm ginger, peeled and chopped

Put all the paste ingredients into a blender, along with 2 tablespoons of rapeseed oil and 2 tablespoons of water, and blend as smooth as possible. (Add a little more oil and water if you need to.)

Over a medium-high heat, put 2 tablespoons of oil into a large frying pan for which you have a lid and, when hot, add the aubergines in a single layer (you may need to fry them in a couple of batches). Fry for around 8 minutes, turning every 2 minutes, or

1½ tsp salt
¼ tsp ground black pepper
8 kaffir lime leaves or 1 tsp lime zest
1 tsp cumin seeds
½ tsp ground turmeric
rapeseed oil

For the curry /

2 medium aubergines (600g), cut into 2cm cubes
2 courgettes (400g), cut into 2cm cubes
1 x 400ml tin of coconut milk
1½ tsp sugar
100g broccoli
100g mangetout

until tender – browning on the outside and softening inside – then transfer to a plate.

Drizzle more oil into the hot pan and cook the courgettes for 4 minutes, turning after 2 minutes, or until almost tender and browning on the outside. Transfer to another plate.

Put a tablespoon of oil into the same pan and, when hot, add the paste. Stir-fry for 4 minutes, then slowly add the coconut milk and 200ml of water, and mix. When the milk starts to bubble, add the sugar, cooked vegetables, broccoli and mangetout, and simmer for 6 minutes, or until all the vegetables are tender, then take off the heat. Serve in bowls with freshly boiled or steamed jasmine rice alongside.

THAI GREEN CURRY WITH AUBERGINES, COURGETTES AND MANGETOUT

NEW POTATO, CHARD AND COCONUT CURRY

V

This dish started life in Karnataka, on the west coast of India. It's a spin on saagu, a curry of whatever vegetables happen to be in season, cooked gently in a soothing, spiced coconut sauce: filling enough to be restorative, quick enough to cook midweek, and light enough to be good company on a summer's night.

note / If you don't have a blender, chop the garlic, ginger and chillies as finely as your fingers and knives will allow, and cook for an extra 5 minutes.

Serves 4 as a main /

- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 3 cloves of garlic
- 2.5cm ginger, peeled and roughly chopped
- 2 green finger chillies, roughly chopped
- 30g desiccated coconut
- 1 x 400ml tin of coconut milk
- 3 tbsp rapeseed oil
- 1 large onion, halved and thinly sliced
- 600g new potatoes, halved lengthways
- 1½ tsp garam masala
- ½ tsp ground turmeric
- 1 tsp salt

Put the cumin, garlic, ginger, chillies and desiccated coconut into a blender with just enough of the coconut milk to blitz everything to a smooth paste. Add the rest of the coconut milk and lightly pulse (over-mixing might split it) to a sauce-like consistency.

In a wide frying pan for which you have a lid, heat the oil over a medium flame and fry the onion for 5 minutes, until translucent. Add the potatoes cut side down and fry for around 10 minutes, until they are lightly golden brown and the onions are soft, dark and sticky.

Stir in the garam masala, turmeric and salt, then add the coconut sauce and bring up to a gentle bubble.

200g rainbow chard, stems chopped, leaves shredded

250g frozen peas, defrosted

Add the chard stems, cover and cook for 5 minutes. Add the leaves and the peas, cover again and simmer for a final 5 minutes, until the chard stems, peas and potatoes are tender and the leaves have wilted. Serve with basmati rice or chapattis and a fiery pickle on the side.

NEW POTATO, CHARD AND COCONUT CURRY

PANEER, TOMATO AND KALE SAAG

For years, I was in kale purgatory. I wanted to love it but I just couldn't. Each bite tasted like hedgerow: stubborn and spiky. But as voices around the world mounted in support of kale, so did my desire to find a way to make the unlovable lovable. It took much experimentation, but finally the result is this. It's a recipe for 4 people, but I could easily eat the whole thing myself. It stands up as a 'saag' by itself, but is all the better for some fried paneer.

note / You'll need a food processor for this curry.

Serves 4 as a main /

500g kale, ribs discarded, leaves roughly chopped
rapeseed oil
450g paneer, cut into 2cm cubes
2 onions, finely chopped
2cm ginger, peeled and grated
4 cloves of garlic, crushed
2 green finger chillies, finely chopped
1 x 400g tin of chopped tomatoes
1½ tsp ground coriander
1½ tsp ground cumin
½ tsp ground turmeric
1½ tsp salt
1 tsp brown rice syrup

Pop the kale into the food processor and whizz into little bits. You'll probably need to do this in two batches and stop halfway through each to push down the bigger bits with a spatula or spoon. Transfer to a big bowl and leave to one side.

On a medium flame, heat 2 tablespoons of oil in a large non-stick frying pan for which you have a lid and, when hot, add the paneer cubes. Fry for a couple of minutes on each side, until they are golden all over, then remove to a plate.

Put another 2 tablespoons of oil into the same pan and place back over a medium heat. When hot, add the onions and cook for 10 minutes until soft and sweet, then add the ginger, garlic and chillies. Cook for 5 minutes, then add the tomatoes. Cook the tomatoes, stirring every now and then, for 8 minutes, until they've reduced to a paste, then add

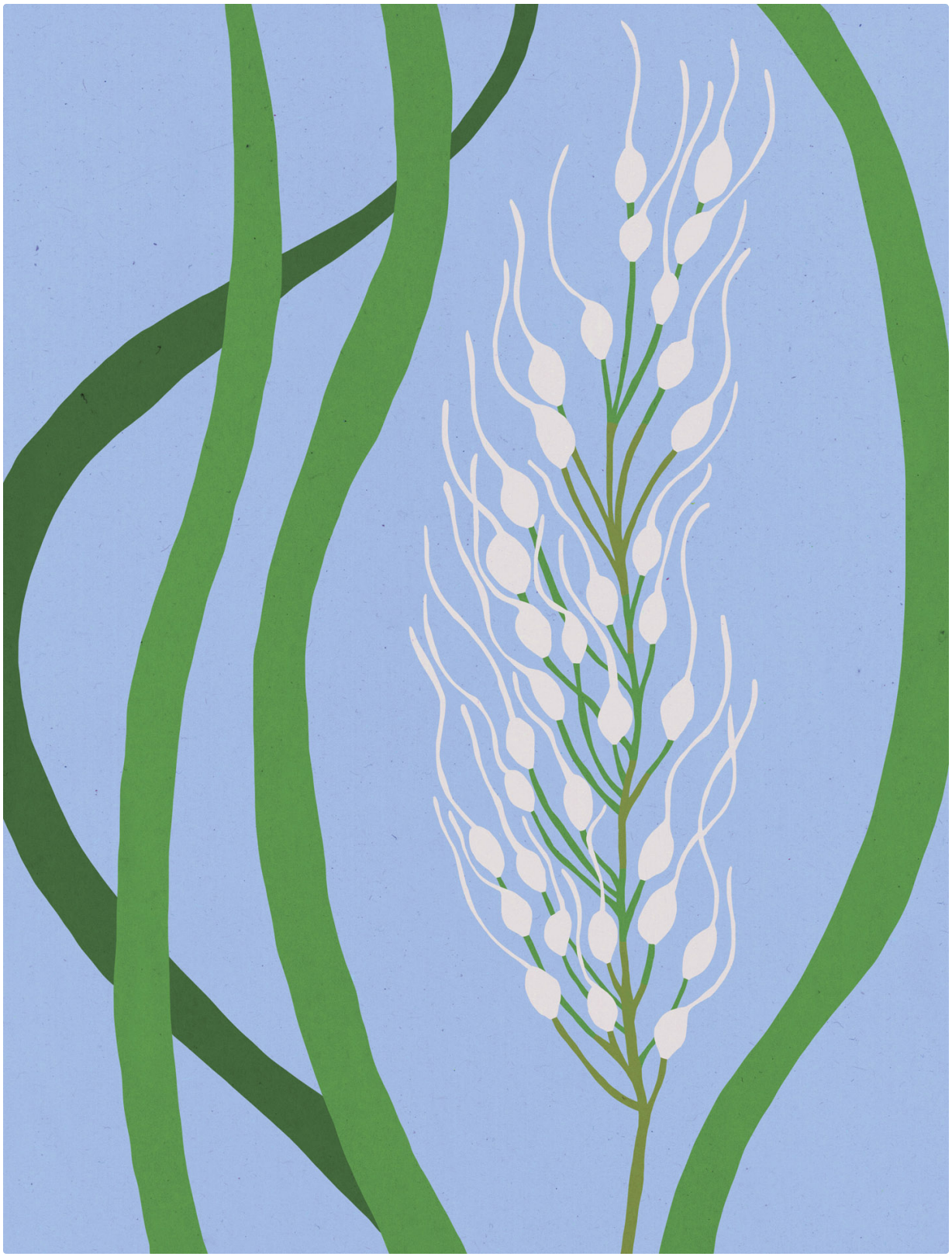
1 x 400ml tin of coconut milk

the coriander, cumin, turmeric, salt and brown rice syrup, and mix well.

Add the kale to the pan in batches, stirring between each handful. It may seem like there is too much kale at first, but it will wilt quickly. Add the coconut milk, stir, and cover with the lid. Leave to cook over a low heat for 15 minutes, then put the paneer back into the pan and cook for another 10 minutes. If the saag seems dry at any point, add a little water, a couple of tablespoons at a time.

Taste to check that the flavours have bedded in and the kale is tender before you take it off the heat, and serve with hot wholemeal chapattis or fluffy naan bread.

PANEER, TOMATO AND KALE SAAG



rice

As one of life's pleasures, there's nothing like the steam that hits the face when you lift the lid of a freshly cooked batch of rice. It's like a portal to a tropical rainforest.

Rice is the staple food and major crop of many countries in East Asia, and although there are perhaps 400,000 varieties worldwide, only a fraction of these are available to us in shops here in the UK. On the next few pages you'll find a guide to the rice I use in this chapter, and how to handle and cook it.

Recipe List

PORTION SIZE

LONG-GRAIN AND MEDIUM-GRAIN RICE

SHORT-GRAIN RICE

SPROUT NASI GORENG

COCONUT RICE with aubergines and pickled cucumber

KIMCHI FRIED RICE

EGG FRIED RICE with peppers, peas and chilli

SPRING PILAU with asparagus, fennel and pea

SUMMER PILAU with tomato, coconut and cashews

AUTUMN PILAU with squash, cavolo nero and smoked garlic

WINTER PILAU with beetroot, cauliflower and coriander chutney

AUBERGINE LARB with sticky rice and a shallot and peanut salad

SWEET POTATO AND TENDERSTEM BIBIMBAP

PICCALILLI SPICED RICE

BEETROOT AND YOGHURT RICE

HERBED WILD RICE with coconut and lime

BLACK RICE CONGEE

BLACK VENUS
STICKY
SUSHI
JASMINE
WILD + BASMATI
BASMATI

PORTION SIZE

Rice portions can vary depending on appetite and also what it is being eaten with. But as a rough guide, I'd recommend anywhere between 60g and 90g of rice per person.

LONG-GRAIN AND MEDIUM-GRAIN RICE

Basmati and wild + basmati rice

The longest grain of them all is my beloved basmati. This is India's status rice, grown in the paddy fields of the Himalayas. But it's also the rice that makes up my bones and for me smells like home. Steam-cook it in stock, like a pilau, and it will obligingly absorb the surrounding flavours. Basmati is often mixed with wild rice, which gives a great contrast between the soft fluffy basmati and firm, nutty wild. It makes the rice more robust too, making it easier to use it as a base to mix other flavours into, without breaking the grains.

To cook 350g

Wash/soak: For fluffy basmati, get rid of the excess starch with a wash and soak. Place it in a bowl, cover with water and agitate with your hands until the water turns cloudy. Drain and repeat until the water is clear, then soak the rice for 10 minutes in hand-hot water, or 20 minutes in cold water, then drain again.

To boil: Place the drained rice in a pan and cover with plenty of freshly boiled water. Bring back up to the boil, simmer for 10 to 12 minutes or until tender, then drain. Cover with a clean tea towel and leave to rest for 5 to 10 minutes.

To steam: Place the drained rice in a lidded saucepan with 600ml of freshly boiled water. Bring to the boil, then place the lid on and turn the heat down to a whisper. Cook for 10 minutes, then take off the heat and leave to steam with the lid on for a further 10 minutes.

Jasmine rice

Jasmine rice is Thailand's long-grain variety, poetically named for its creamy white colour rather than its scent (in fact it smells faintly like popcorn when it cooks). This is a great everyday rice as it does not need soaking. You can just wash it and throw it straight into a pan – as such, it's perfect for weeknight suppers.

To cook 350g

Wash/soak: Place the rice in a sieve and rinse under a cold tap until the water runs clear, then drain.

To boil: Place the drained rice in a pan and cover with plenty of freshly boiled water. Bring back up to boil, simmer for 15 minutes or until tender, then drain. Cover with a clean tea towel and leave to rest for 5 to 10 minutes.

To steam: Place the drained rice in a lidded pan with 600ml of freshly boiled water. Bring to the boil, place the lid on, then turn the heat down to a whisper. Cook for 15 minutes, then take off the heat and leave to steam with the lid on for a further 5 to 10 minutes.

Black venus rice

The only medium-grain rice I use in this book, and a relatively new kid on the block. Black rice was once rare and forbidden to all but the Chinese aristocracy as it was thought to ensure longevity. But in the 1990s it was crossed with an Italian risotto rice to create a delightfully firm, chewy and nutty rice unlike any other rice I've tasted before. It's since become widely available in supermarkets and online. I use it in my forbidden rice salad (see page 47) and in my congee (see page 157), the hot rice porridge eaten for breakfast in China.

To cook 350g

Wash/soak: No need to wash or soak.

To cook: Place in a pan and cover with plenty of cold water. Bring to the boil, simmer for 18 minutes or until tender, then drain (if cooking congee, follow the instructions on page 157). Cover with a clean tea towel and leave to rest for 5 to 10 minutes.

SHORT-GRAIN RICE

Short-grain and sushi rice

Short-grain rice is popular in Korea, Thailand and Japan. The starch in these grains makes them cling on tightly to one another when cooked, making them perfect for eating with chopsticks. The Korean bibimbap (see page 148) is a great introduction to a dish made with short-grain or sushi rice (outside of sushi).

To cook 350g

Wash/soak: Place the rice in a medium-sized lidded pan and cover with lukewarm water. Agitate with your hand until the water turns cloudy. Drain and repeat, until the water runs clear. Cover with warm water and leave to soak for 5 minutes, then drain again.

To cook: Place the drained rice back into the pan with 400ml of cold water. Put the lid on, bring to the boil, then turn the heat down to a whisper and cook for 10 minutes. Take off the heat and leave to steam with the lid on for a further 10 minutes.

Thai sticky (or glutinous) rice

Thai sticky rice is the stickiest of all, and is usually served in one gloriously chewy clump in Thai restaurants. It's a good idea to season this rice as it cooks, as it is too sticky to season afterwards. See my aubergine larb (page 147) for a great sticky rice recipe.

Wash/soak: Place the rice in a sieve and rinse it well under the cold tap, then drain. Cover the rice with cold water and leave to soak for 20 minutes, then drain again.

To cook: Put the drained rice in a lidded pan, cover with 520ml of cold water and add ½ teaspoon of salt. Bring to the boil, then turn the heat down to its lowest setting and simmer for 15 minutes, until all the water has evaporated and the rice is cooked. Cover with the lid, and leave to stand for at least 10 minutes.

SPROUT NASI GORENG

V

Sometimes, all you really want is something with the sort of filthy and delicious taste that I used to think only a good takeaway could provide – until I accidentally recreated it while writing this recipe. It's fried rice, but not as you know it: smothered in umami-ific sauces and topped with shredded, marinated sprouts for crunch and zing. All the joy of a takeaway, but without the wait or delivery charge.

note / Kecap manis is a sweet Indonesian soy sauce that can be found in larger supermarkets, online and in South East Asian food shops (to make your own, see page 256). You can deseed the chillies if you prefer less heat. I cut the sprouts by hand, but you could use the fine slicing attachment on a food processor.

Serves 4 as a main /

350g jasmine rice
3 tbsp rapeseed oil
1 red onion, chopped
4 cloves of garlic, crushed
3 bird's-eye chillies, very finely chopped
750g Brussels sprouts, very finely sliced
2 tbsp tomato puree
2 tbsp kecap manis
1¼ tsp salt, plus extra to taste

Place the rice in a sieve and rinse under a cold tap until the water runs clear. Tip the rice into a pan, add 600ml of freshly boiled water and bring to the boil. Place the lid on, then turn the heat down to a whisper and cook for 15 minutes. Take off the heat and leave to steam with the lid on.

To cook the nasi goreng base, heat the rapeseed oil in a large frying pan on a medium flame and fry the onion, stirring, for 5 minutes. Add the garlic and two-thirds of the chopped chillies, cook for 2 minutes more, then add all but two large handfuls

2 tbsp soy sauce
2 tbsp white wine vinegar
2 tbsp toasted sesame oil
1 tsp caster sugar

(or about 150g) of the sprouts. Fry for 8 minutes, leaving them undisturbed for a couple of minutes at a time, so they get some colour on them. Then stir in the tomato puree, kecap manis, salt and a tablespoon each of soy sauce and vinegar. Cook for another 5 minutes, then take off the heat.

To make the marinated sprouts, put the remaining raw sliced sprouts into a bowl with 1 tablespoon of soy sauce, 1 tablespoon of vinegar, the sesame oil, sugar and the remaining chopped chillies. Mix very well and set aside.

To finish the nasi goreng, put the sprout and onion pan on a medium heat and gently scoop in the steamed rice, folding it in until well mixed. Heat through, stirring gently, for 5 minutes, until the rice is nice and hot, and season with salt to taste. Transfer to a big platter, scatter the marinated sprouts over the top, and serve.

SPROUT NASI GORENG

COCONUT RICE with aubergines and pickled cucumber

V

One of the reasons I live in London is that I can travel anywhere in the world through the city's food. Within a 10-minute walk, I could be eating hand-pulled noodles from the northern Chinese province of Xinjiang, smoky aubergines cooked over coals by Anatolian Turks, or Nigerian fried yam. Even if I've not been to the country in question, a dish can transport me there instantly. This is what happened when I ate my first Malaysian nasi lemak. I have tried to recreate these flavours here, and while I can't claim it has any authenticity, I hope it will transport you as it did me.

Serves 4 as a main /

For the pickle /

½ a cucumber
2 tbsp lemon juice
¾ tsp caster sugar
½ a bird's-eye chilli, very finely chopped

For the rice /

350g jasmine rice
300ml coconut milk (the rest of the tin goes into the aubergines)

For the aubergines /

3 tbsp rapeseed oil

First, make the pickle. Cut the cucumber in half lengthways, scoop out and discard the seeds, then finely dice the flesh. Put into a bowl with the lemon juice, ¼ teaspoon of salt, the caster sugar and chilli, and mix to combine.

Place the rice in a sieve and rinse under a cold tap until the water runs clear. Scoop into a saucepan for which you have a lid, with 300ml of coconut milk, 250ml of water and ¼ teaspoon of salt, bring to the boil, then cover the pan and turn the heat down to a whisper. Cook for 15 minutes, then take off the heat and leave to steam with the lid on.

In a lidded frying pan, heat the oil on a high flame, then fry the onion, stirring, for about 8 minutes, until

1 red onion, halved and thinly sliced
3 cloves of garlic, crushed
1½ bird's-eye chillies, very finely chopped
1kg aubergines, cut into slices then into 1.5cm-thick batons
100ml coconut milk
1 tbsp tamarind paste
1 tbsp light soy sauce
salt
½ tsp sugar
a handful of salted peanuts, crushed

soft and golden. Add the garlic and chillies, cook for a couple of minutes more, then stir in the aubergines. Add 3 tablespoons of water, clap on the lid and leave to cook, stirring every now and then; if it starts looking too dry, add a tablespoon of water. After about 15 minutes, when the aubergines are starting to brown and have reduced in volume, add the 100ml of coconut milk, the tamarind, soy sauce, ¼ teaspoon of salt and the sugar. Cook until the liquid evaporates, then take off the heat.

To serve, pile the aubergines on top of the rice, scatter a little drained cucumber pickle on top and finish with a sprinkling of peanuts.

COCONUT RICE WITH AUBERGINES AND PICKLED CUCUMBER

KIMCHI FRIED RICE

VO

A recipe for people who like to turn the volume on their food right up. Kimchi and gochujang are two boldly flavoured bullies in the world of ingredients, one sour and spicy and the other sweet and hot. Left to their own devices they might run riot, but here they're tamed by the plump cushion of white rice and fried eggs.

note / Kimchi varies in quality and is not always suitable for vegetarians (or vegans). Buy the best you can, and remember to check the label.

Serves 4 as a main /

- 300g jasmine rice or 600g cooked rice
- 260g kimchi
- 1 tbsp toasted sesame oil
- 2 tbsp gochujang paste
- 1½ tbsp light soy sauce
- rapeseed oil
- 2 cloves of garlic, crushed
- 4 spring onions, finely chopped
- 150g baby-leaf spinach
- optional: 4 eggs, to serve

If you're cooking the rice, place it in a sieve and rinse under a cold tap until the water runs clear. Tip the rice into a lidded saucepan, add 450ml of freshly boiled water and bring to the boil. Place the lid on, turn the heat down to a whisper and cook for 15 minutes, then take off the heat and leave to steam with the lid on for a further 5 to 10 minutes. Remove the lid, fluff up with a fork and allow to cool.

Place the kimchi in a shallow bowl and cut with kitchen scissors into bite-size pieces (this is easier than draining and chopping on a board, but you could do that too – just remember to keep the juice). Put the sesame oil, gochujang and soy sauce into another smaller bowl and mix with a fork.

Put 1 tablespoon of rapeseed oil into a large frying pan over a medium-high heat. When hot, add the garlic and fry for a minute until it turns golden, then add the kimchi and spring onions. Fry for 5 to 6 minutes, until the mixture dries in the pan and starts to caramelize. Then add the sesame and soy sauce mix, stir well and add the rice.

Stir-fry the rice for a couple of minutes to heat it up, then fold in the spinach bit by bit until it wilts. Taste and season with more soy sauce if need be, then take off the heat.

If you're including the eggs, put ½ teaspoon of rapeseed oil into a small frying pan over a high heat. Crack in 2 eggs, cook for 1 minute, until the whites are set and crispy and the yolks are still runny, then repeat with the remaining eggs. Dish up the rice into four bowls, and top each bowl with an egg.

EGG FRIED RICE with peppers, peas and chilli

When you've been soothed by the restorative powers of a simple egg fried rice, you might wonder why it isn't prescribed for life's minor ailments: disgruntlement at work, irritable children, parking fines and the like. My mother has always made hers in the traditional Chinese way, seasoned and using just egg and spring onions, but I, in recent times (since acquiring a toddler), have started to add more vegetables. These (alongside some Chinese five spice) transform this already wonderful dish into something we can all very happily enjoy for lunch or dinner.

Serves 4 as a main /

250g uncooked basmati rice or 550g pre-cooked rice
450ml vegetable stock (only if you're cooking the rice)
3 tbsp rapeseed oil, plus extra for the eggs
1 red pepper, finely diced
2 carrots, peeled and finely diced
2 cloves of garlic, crushed
1 green finger chilli, finely chopped
10 spring onions, sliced, whites and greens separated
1 tsp Chinese five spice
150g frozen peas, defrosted
1 x 165g tin of sweetcorn, drained
4 medium eggs
4 tbsp light soy sauce
sriracha, to serve

If you're cooking the rice, wash it in a few changes of cold water until the water runs clear, leave to soak in cold water for 20 minutes, then drain really well. Place the rice in a lidded saucepan, heat for a minute, then pour in the stock. Bring to the boil, put the lid on, then turn the heat down to a whisper. Cook for 10 minutes, then take off the heat and leave to one side with the lid on to allow the rice to rest.

Meanwhile, heat the oil in a frying pan over a medium heat and add the pepper, carrots, garlic, chilli and the white part of the spring onions. Cook for 8 minutes, then add the Chinese five spice, peas and sweetcorn. Heat through for a couple of minutes, then tip on to a plate.

Take the pan off the hob and turn the heat down low. Drizzle in a little more oil if needed, then break the eggs into the pan and stir vigorously to mix. Place back on the heat and cook for 2 minutes until the eggs are custardy and starting to set. Add the reserved spring onion greens and the rice, stir well to combine, and cook until the rice is hot. Add the rest of the vegetables, and season with soy sauce (I use 4 table-spoons, but you might need more or less depending on the strength of your vegetable stock, so taste as you go).

To serve, drizzle with a little srirachra, to taste.

SPRING PILAU with asparagus, fennel and pea

V

In the cut-and-thrust of spring, it can feel that all the vegetables have turned up to the party at once. So the question is not so much which one to eat, but how to hang a few together so they make sense on the same plate. In this simple pilau, the fennel softens and melts into the background, joining the onions and garlic to form a deep base flavour, while the asparagus, peas, broad beans and herbs take a front seat, to keep things light, fresh and sweet.

note / Although I prefer home-made, I like garam masalas from Bart or Steenbergs. Whichever you use, make sure it's fresh and doesn't taste like sawdust. Feel free to add more peas and skip the broad beans if you prefer.

Serves 4 as a main /

350g basmati rice
600ml vegan vegetable stock
3 tbsp rapeseed oil
2 red onions, finely sliced
4 cloves of garlic, crushed
2 green finger chillies, very finely sliced
1 medium fennel bulb, trimmed and thinly sliced
250g asparagus, tailed, cut into 4cm pieces
200g mixed frozen petit pois and broad beans, defrosted
1½ tsp ground cumin
1½ tsp garam masala
¾ tsp salt

Wash the rice in a few changes of cold water until it runs clear, then leave to soak in cold water for 20 minutes. Drain the rice, put into a large lidded saucepan and pour over the stock. Bring to the boil, then cover the pan, turn the heat down to a whisper and leave to cook for 10 to 12 minutes. Take off the heat and leave the rice, still covered, to steam through until needed.

Meanwhile, heat the oil in a large, lidded pan on a medium flame. Once hot, add the onions and cook for 6 to 8 minutes, until translucent and softening but not yet coloured. Add the garlic and chillies, cook for another 2 minutes, then stir in the fennel and a couple of tablespoons of water, and cover the pan. Leave to cook for 8 minutes, until soft, then add the asparagus, peas, broad beans, cumin, garam masala and salt. Stir, cover again, cook for 3 to 5 minutes more, then take off the heat.

a big handful of fresh mint leaves
a big handful of fresh dill
1 lemon, cut into wedges, to serve

Finely chop the herbs and fold them and the rice into the vegetable mixture – you might need to break up any clumps of rice delicately with your hands – then transfer to a serving dish and serve with wedges of lemon on the side.

SPRING PILAU WITH ASPARAGUS, FENNEL AND PEA

SUMMER PILAU with tomato, coconut and cashews

V

Tomatoes work in different ways in this recipe: they create a wonderful sauce with the coconut milk, which is used to flavour and cook the rice, and then they float to the top to decorate the dish. The end result is a dish delicious enough to stand on its own feet without the need for anything else and (as a side benefit) it uses just a single pan. You'll need a wide frying pan with a tight-fitting lid.

note / Curry leaves add a lovely citrus and smoke flavour to the rice but can be tricky to find unless you live near an Asian supermarket, although larger supermarkets do have them sometimes. If you can't find them, leave them out.

Serves 4 as a main /

350g basmati rice
2 tbsp rapeseed oil
12 fresh curry leaves
4cm cinnamon stick
1 large onion, finely sliced
4 cloves of garlic, crushed
1 green finger chilli, finely sliced
50g unsalted cashews
400g baby plum tomatoes, halved

Wash the rice in a few changes of cold water until the water runs clear, then leave to soak in plenty of cold water.

Meanwhile, heat the oil in a wide frying pan and add the curry leaves and cinnamon stick. Stir-fry for a minute, then add the onion and cook for around 10 to 12 minutes, until it starts to turn golden brown and is soft enough to cut with a wooden spoon. Add the garlic, chilli and cashews, and cook for a couple of minutes, then add the tomatoes and pop

1 x 400ml tin of coconut milk
1¾ tsp salt

the lid on. Cook for around 8 minutes, until the tomatoes are soft and jammy around the edges.

Drain the rice, add it to the pan and stir to combine. Add the coconut milk, 200ml of water and the salt. Stir again and bring the mixture to the boil, then pop the lid on, turn the heat down to a whisper and cook for a further 15 minutes. Don't be tempted to lift the lid as the steam is key to cooking the rice. Once the 15 minutes is up, take off the heat and keep the lid on for a further 10 minutes to let the rice rest before eating. Serve alongside a fresh green salad.

SUMMER PILAU WITH TOMATO, COCONUT AND CASHEWS

AUTUMN PILAU with squash, cavolo nero and smoked garlic

V

In this autumnal pilau I've used two of the season's finest vegetables – buttery squash and earthy plumes of black cabbage, or cavolo nero – alongside smoked garlic, which adds a glorious and timely bonfirey-ness to proceedings.

note / In autumn, smoked garlic is available in many larger supermarkets and smaller grocers.

Serves 4 as a main /

- **300g basmati rice**
- **1kg squash,** halved, deseeded and cut into 1cm half-moons
- **5 tbsp rapeseed oil**
- **salt and ground black pepper**
- **3 brown onions,** thinly sliced
- **4 cloves of smoked garlic,** very thinly sliced
- **1½ tsp ground cumin**
- **1½ tsp garam masala**
- **½ tsp ground turmeric**
- **2 green finger chillies,** finely chopped
- **20g fresh coriander,** leaves picked, stems finely chopped

Preheat the oven to 200°C fan/220°C/425°F/gas 7. Wash the rice in a few changes of cold water until the water runs clear, then leave to soak in cold water until you're ready to cook it.

Arrange the squash in a single layer on a large baking tray, drizzle over 3 tablespoons of oil and season with a pinch of salt and black pepper, then roast for 30 minutes, until tender.

Meanwhile, heat a large lidded saucepan on a medium flame. Put the remaining 2 tablespoons of rapeseed oil into the pan, and add the onions and smoked garlic. Sweat for 8 minutes, then add the spices, chillies, coriander stems and 1¾ teaspoons of salt. Cook for 4 minutes, until the onions start to brown, then add the cavolo nero.

200g cavolo nero, stalks removed, leaves roughly chopped

1 lemon, cut into 4 wedges

Drain the rice and gently stir into the pan, then add 600ml of warm water. Bring to the boil, put the lid on, then turn the heat down to a whisper and leave to cook for 20 minutes. Take off the heat and leave to steam with the lid still on for a further 10 minutes.

When both the rice and the squash are cooked, gently fold the squash into the rice and tip on to a platter (or spoon on to individual plates). Serve with a generous squeeze of lemon and a scattering of coriander leaves.

AUTUMN PILAU WITH SQUASH, CAVOLO NERO AND SMOKED GARLIC

WINTER PILAU with beetroot, cauliflower and coriander chutney

V

Every Indian auntie has a special pilau recipe that is often the subject of much debate and competitiveness. 'I think Asha uses MSG in hers,' I once heard one auntie whisper. Now, pilau might sound humdrum, but with some elaboration it becomes an unbridled joy: each grain of rice plump and flavourful; burnished vegetables lying ready to be unearthed; and bright bursts of pomegranate and chilli slicing through the comfort blanket. I am now an auntie myself, and I'd be thrilled if my pilau became the topic of conversation in someone else's kitchen.

note / This was originally called 'Festive Pilau' in the *Guardian*. You'll need a blender for this recipe.

Serves 4 as a main /

300g basmati rice
600g cauliflower (½ a big one), broken into bite-size florets
400g raw beetroot, peeled and cut into wedges
300g swede (½ a small one), peeled and cut into 1cm x 3cm slices
2½ tsp garam masala
rapeseed oil

Preheat the oven to 200°C fan/220°C/425°F/gas 7. Wash the rice in a few changes of cold water until the water runs clear, then leave to soak in cold water.

Put the cauliflower on a baking tray in a single layer and put the beetroot and swede on another baking sheet in a single layer. In a small bowl, mix the garam masala, 5 tablespoons of rapeseed oil and ¾ teaspoon of salt, then drizzle over the veg on both trays and toss to coat. Roast for 25 to 30 minutes,

salt
1 x 400ml tin of coconut milk
6 cloves of garlic, roughly chopped
2cm ginger, peeled
2 green finger chillies
1 tsp ground turmeric
1 large onion, finely sliced
100g fresh coriander
1 tbsp lemon juice
1 tsp caster sugar
2 handfuls of pomegranate seeds, to top

until tender and caramelized in places (the swede and beetroot may need a little longer).

While the vegetables are cooking, make the sauce for the rice. Put 300ml of the coconut milk into a blender with the garlic, ginger, 1 chilli, the turmeric and ¾ teaspoon of salt, then blitz smooth.

In a large frying pan with a tight-fitting lid, heat 2 tablespoons of oil on a medium heat. Fry the onion for 10 minutes then add the coconut sauce and cook for 8 minutes, stirring frequently. Add the drained rice with 400ml of freshly boiled water, and bring to the boil. Put on the lid, turn the heat down to a whisper and cook for 20 minutes, until the rice is cooked through. Take off the heat, fold through the vegetables, pop the lid back on and leave to steam for 10 minutes.

While the rice is steaming, make the chutney. Add the remaining 100ml of coconut milk, the coriander, the other chilli, lemon juice, sugar and ½ teaspoon of salt. Blend smooth, then scrape into a serving bowl. Transfer the rice to a platter, sprinkle with the pomegranate seeds and serve with the bowl of chutney alongside.

WINTER PILAU WITH BEETROOT, CAULIFLOWER AND CORIANDER CHUTNEY

AUBERGINE LARB with sticky rice and a shallot and peanut salad

V

There is something primally delicious about larb, a salad from Laos in which the dressing is king. Larb is sweet, sour, salty, bitter and has bags of umami. This recipe is based on one I ate at Supawan in King's Cross, London, one of the finest Thai restaurants I've ever visited.

note / A food processor or spice grinder will make quick work of grinding the peanuts, but you can also crush them with a pestle and mortar.

Serves 4 as a main /

For the rice /

350g Thai sticky (glutinous) rice

For the larb /

4 medium aubergines (250g each)
rapeseed oil
salt
2 tbsp palm sugar
2 tbsp lime juice (from 1½ limes)
2½ tbsp soy sauce
2 tsp tamarind paste
1½ bird's-eye chillies, very finely chopped

Preheat the oven to 200°C fan/220°C/425°F/gas 7. Put the rice into a sieve and rinse it well under the cold tap, then cover it with cold water and leave to soak for 20 minutes.

In the meantime, cut the aubergines in half lengthways and score a criss-cross pattern on the cut sides. Brush all over with oil and put cut side up on two baking sheets. Bake for 20 minutes, brush the cut side with more oil and bake for another 20 to 25 minutes, until creamy inside.

Meanwhile, make the rice and the salad. Drain the rice, put it in a lidded saucepan, cover with 520ml of cold water and add ½ teaspoon of salt. Bring to the boil, then turn down the heat to its lowest setting

For the salad /

3 tbsp rapeseed oil

2 large shallots (200g), halved lengthways and finely sliced

scant ½ tsp salt

40g ground peanuts

a large handful of fresh coriander, finely chopped

40 fresh Thai basil leaves, finely chopped

½ a bird's-eye chilli, finely chopped

1 tbsp lime juice (from 1 lime)

and simmer for 15 minutes, until all the water has evaporated and the rice is cooked. Cover with the lid, and leave to stand for at least 10 minutes.

To make the salad, heat the oil in a small frying pan on a medium flame and fry the shallots for around 20 minutes, until brown and crisp. Take off the heat and stir in the salt, ground peanuts, herbs, chillies and lime juice.

To make the larb dressing, put the palm sugar, lime juice, soy sauce, tamarind paste and chilli in a small saucepan with 8 tablespoons of water. Heat, stirring, until the sugar melts, then take off the heat, taste and add up to ½ teaspoon of salt, if need be.

To serve, put a flat mound of rice on each plate, layer over two aubergine halves, pour on the dressing and sprinkle the salad on top.

AUBERGINE LARB WITH STICKY RICE AND A SHALLOT AND PEANUT SALAD

SWEET POTATO AND TENDERSTEM BIBIMBAP

The Korean bibimbap allows for infinite variations. The only hard and fast rule is that the bottom layer should be rice, on to which vegetables, an egg and plenty of sweet, hot gochujang sauce – a sauce that'll make your taste buds jump for joy – are piled. I like the sweet potato and greens combination in this recipe, but sweetcorn, thinly sliced courgette, roasted cauliflower, leeks and mangetout also work really well.

Serves 4 as a main /

For the gochujang sauce /

- 4½ tbsp gochujang paste
- 3 tbsp toasted sesame oil
- 1½ tbsp light soy sauce
- 1½ tbsp brown rice syrup
- 1½ tbsp rice wine vinegar

For the vegetables /

- 2½ tbsp soy sauce
- 2½ tbsp toasted sesame oil
- 1 clove of garlic, grated
- 3 tbsp rapeseed oil
- 500g sweet potatoes (about 2), peeled and cut into 0.5cm rounds

In a small bowl, mix together all the ingredients for the gochujang sauce. Next, in another small bowl, mix together the soy sauce, sesame oil and garlic for the vegetables and leave to one side.

Place the rice in a medium-sized lidded saucepan and cover with lukewarm water. Stir with your hand until the water turns cloudy. Drain and repeat, until the water runs clear, then cover with warm water and leave to soak for 5 minutes. Drain, then tip the rice back into the saucepan with 400ml of cold water. Place the pan over a high heat, put the lid on, bring to the boil, then turn the heat down to a whisper and cook for 10 minutes. Take off the heat and leave to steam with the lid on.

For the vegetables, heat 1 tablespoon of oil in a large lidded frying pan. When hot, add the sweet potatoes in a single layer (you may need to fry in two batches). Fry for 3 to 4 minutes on either side

300g Tenderstem broccoli, big stems cut in half

4 medium eggs

2 avocados, peeled, destoned and cut into 1cm slices

optional: a handful of mixed seeds (such as pumpkin and sesame), to serve

For the rice /

350g sushi or short-grain rice

(until tender), and place in a bowl to one side. Add another tablespoon of oil to the pan and fry the broccoli. Again, cook in batches if need be. Fry for 2 minutes on each side until the florets are blackening. Then add 2 tablespoons of water to the pan (careful, it may spit), cover and steam for 3 minutes. Remove the broccoli to the plate with the sweet potatoes, pour over the soy and sesame dressing and mix.

Finally, add 1 more tablespoon of oil to the frying pan and crack in your eggs. Fry these until the whites are just set and the yolks are still runny.

To build your bibimbap, divide the rice between four bowls. Place a fried egg in the centre of each bowl, then put 4 or 5 slices of sweet potato, 5 or 6 stems of broccoli and 4 slices of avocado around the egg, leaving the yolk and some of the white visible. Drizzle each bowl with a tablespoon of gochujang sauce, sprinkle with seeds (if using) and serve.

SWEET POTATO AND TENDERSTEM BIBIMBAP

PICCALILLI SPICED RICE

VO

Piccalilli is the most strange and wonderful of British condiments. Its neon-yellow presence evokes a world of tea cakes, tennis whites and summers spent pickling allotment vegetables to the sound of the cricket on the radio. But it is also a reassuring reminder of the love affair between Britain and India that is still playing out in our kitchens more than 400 years after it started.

The vegetables are best chopped small for this, so be prepared for a reasonable amount of chopping. Basic large red chillies, which are often mild, are perfect here, rather than hot bird's-eye chillies.

Serves 4 as a main /

- 1 large cauliflower (800g)
- rapeseed oil
- salt
- 300g basmati rice
- 1½ tsp black mustard seeds
- 1½ tsp cumin seeds
- 1 large red onion, diced
- 350g carrots (4 medium), peeled and finely diced
- 3 cloves of garlic, crushed
- 2 large red chillies, finely sliced

Preheat the oven to 200°C fan/220°C/425°F/gas 7. Line two trays with foil and cut the cauliflower into bite-size florets no wider than 2cm. Put in a single layer across the trays, drizzle with oil and sprinkle with a little salt, then roast for 15 minutes, or until crisp, turning once halfway.

Meanwhile, wash the rice in a few changes of cold water until the water runs clear, then leave to soak in a pan of hand-hot water for 10 minutes. Drain, cover with plenty of freshly boiled water, bring to the boil and simmer for 10 to 12 minutes, or until tender. Drain again, leave in the sieve over the pan, cover with a clean tea towel, and set aside.

200g green beans, cut into 2cm pieces
4 tsp jarred English mustard
2½ tbsp lemon juice
½ tsp ground turmeric

Heat 3 tablespoons of oil in a large non-stick frying pan and add the black mustard and cumin seeds. Let them sizzle and pop, then add the onion and carrots. Cook for 10 minutes until both are starting to caramelize, then add the garlic and chillies, and fry for 3 minutes, until the raw smell of garlic disappears. Add the beans, cook for 3 to 4 minutes until tender (but still crunchy), then add the English mustard, lemon juice, turmeric and 1¾ teaspoons of salt. Stir in the roasted cauliflower, then slowly fold in the rice until everything is well mixed and the rice is a uniform yellow.

Check the rice for mustard, lemon and salt, and adjust as you wish. Serve with a dollop of yoghurt (non-dairy, if vegan) and some mango chutney on the side.

PICCALILLI SPICED RICE

BEETROOT AND YOGHURT RICE

VO

In this recipe I married two of my favourite South Indian dishes. The first is curd rice, a dish which has a place in the heart of all Tamilians. It is rice mixed with yoghurt and tempered with mustard leaves, curry leaves and chilli. The second is a Keralan beetroot pachadi, a grated beetroot dish cooked with garlic, coconut and cumin seeds. The result is heavenly, flavour-packed and cooling – a perfect meal for a summer's night.

Serve 4 as a main /

- **300g basmati rice**
- **3 tbsp coconut oil**
- **8 fresh curry leaves**
- **½ tsp cumin seeds**
- **1 tsp black mustard seeds**
- **3 shallots,** halved and thinly sliced
- **3 cloves of garlic,** crushed
- **1–2 green finger chillies** (to taste), very finely chopped
- **30g desiccated coconut**
- **500g raw beetroot,** peeled and grated
- **1½ tsp salt**
- **250g Greek (or thick non-dairy) yoghurt**
- **a handful of toasted cashews**

Wash the rice in a few changes of cold water until the water runs clear, then drain and leave to soak in cold water for 20 minutes. Tip the drained rice into a medium saucepan, cover with 500ml of freshly boiled water and place over a medium heat. Bring to the boil, place the lid on, then turn the heat down to a whisper and cook for 10 minutes. Take off the heat and leave to steam with the lid on while you get on with the rest of the dish.

In a large frying pan for which you have a lid, heat the oil over a medium flame and, when hot – like, really hot (be patient) – add the curry leaves, cumin and black mustard seeds. Let them crackle and pop, then add the shallots. Cook for 6 minutes until soft and browning, then add the garlic, chillies and coconut.

Fry the mixture until the coconut is toasted. Remove 2 tablespoons to a bowl to decorate the final dish,

then add the beetroot, salt and 5 tablespoons of water to the pan. Put the lid on and cook for 10 minutes until the beetroot is soft, then gently fold in the yoghurt. Cook for 2 more minutes, then carefully fold in the cooked rice, in batches, until it is well incorporated. Put the lid back on and allow the dish to rest for 10 minutes.

Sprinkle over the remaining shallot mixture and the toasted cashews, and serve.

BEETROOT AND YOGHURT RICE

HERBED WILD RICE with coconut and lime

V

I've always wanted to be the kind of cook who has a flourishing garden, but I haven't quite got there. Instead, I tend to buy large bunches of herbs from my greengrocer, but even with the best intentions they often languish at the bottom of the fridge. When that happens, this recipe is the perfect remedy. It's based on the Malaysian recipe nasi ulam, in which various herbs and toasted coconut are mixed into boiled rice. All you need to do is boil the rice, mix in the other ingredients, and voila, you have a meal: tasty enough to eat by itself or as part of a bigger spread.

note / If you can't find toasted coconut flakes, buy plain ones and toast them for a couple of minutes in a dry pan to bring out the lovely nutty sweetness.

Serves 2 for lunch or 4 as part of a main meal /

375g wild and basmati rice
1 tbsp salt
20g fresh Thai basil, leaves shredded
15g fresh mint, leaves shredded
15g fresh coriander, finely chopped

Wash the rice in a few changes of cold water until the water runs clear, then leave to soak for 20 minutes in cold water. Drain, then place in a lidded saucepan with 1½ litres of freshly boiled water and bring to the boil. Add the salt, and simmer for 20 minutes until the rice is tender. Drain the rice, put it back into the saucepan, cover with the lid and allow to rest for 10 minutes.

40g fried onions (shop-bought)
60g unsalted peanuts
3 tbsp lime juice (from 2 limes)
3 tbsp rapeseed oil
1 tbsp light soy sauce
25g toasted coconut flakes

After the rice has rested, allow to cool a little then add all the other ingredients and mix well. Taste and adjust the seasoning if need be, and transfer to a serving platter to serve.

HERBED WILD RICE WITH COCONUT AND LIME

BLACK RICE CONGEE

V

A bowl of congee is China's ultimate comfort food. When your taste buds want something soothing and gentle, congee is the one. There are three elements to congee: the rice, stock and toppings. I prefer the grains of rice to be intact when cooked, so I've used black venus rice here, a variety of naturally delicious and nutty rice which doesn't easily break down. I've topped the dish with a quick radish pickle. Feel free to have a play around, but some of my favourite toppings include a soy egg (see page 37), fried shallots, chilli oil (see page 257), sautéed vegetables or just a handful of spring onions and a drizzle of sesame oil.

Serves 4 as a main /

For the congee /

- 2 tbsp rapeseed oil
- 3 cloves of garlic, crushed
- 250g chestnut mushrooms, roughly chopped
- 250g black venus rice
- ¼ tsp salt
- 1 litre vegan vegetable stock
- 1½ tsp light soy sauce

For the pickle /

- 80ml white wine vinegar
- 2 tbsp caster sugar

Place a large saucepan over a medium-high heat and warm the oil. Add the garlic and sweat for a couple of minutes until just browning. Add the mushrooms and cook, stirring regularly, for 10 minutes until dark brown and starting to crisp. Add the rice and salt, and toss and toast in the mushroomy oil for 2 minutes. Pour in the stock and 1 litre of water, bring to the boil, reduce the heat to the lowest possible setting and simmer for 1½ to 1¾ hours, until the rice is falling apart and has no 'bite' at all. Take off the heat and stir through the soy sauce.

While the congee is cooking, make the pickle. In a small saucepan over a low flame, combine the vinegar, sugar and 2½ tablespoons of water, and

100g radishes (around 10), finely sliced into rounds

bring to a simmer so that the sugar dissolves. Place the radishes in a small heatproof bowl and pour over the hot pickling liquor. Put to one side until you are ready to eat the congee. The pickling liquor should turn an exciting pink, and the vegetables will soften slightly.

Serve comforting bowlfuls of the congee with a few pickled radishes on top.

BLACK RICE CONGEE

tofu

Few ingredients deserve their own chapter, but tofu definitely does.

Until a couple of years ago, I was a tofu-denier. Like many others, I saw this flavourless bean curd as a substitute for meat and didn't appreciate it as an ingredient in its own right. The dish that changed my mind was chilli tofu. I shared a plate with my father at his favourite bolthole, a canteen called Tangoe in Leicester. The tofu was crisp and chewy, giving way to a soft and creamy sponginess, and doused in a sweet, fiery sauce. This is living, I remember thinking – until we got to the last piece. The daughter should surely have it, I thought, but he decided it was the father's right. I am pleased to report that we're still on speaking terms.

Recipe List

TYPES OF TOFU

SCRAMBLED TOFU AKURI

SILKEN TOFU with pine nuts and pickled chillies

TEMPEH with pak choi and tomato sambal

MUSHROOM MAPO TOFU

CELERIAC, TOFU AND KALE GADO GADO

HONEY, SOY AND GINGER BRAISED TOFU

CHILLI TOFU

SMOKED TOFU, MUSHROOM AND ALMOND KHEEMA

SPRING VEGETABLE BUN CHA

MEDIUM-FIRM TOFU
SILKEN TOFU
SMOKED TOFU
TEMPEH
FIRM TOFU

TYPES OF TOFU

Firm and extra-firm tofu

These are the types I cook with most frequently at home and use for most of the tofu recipes in this book. They are robust and perfect for pan-frying because they develop a golden crust; but they can also be thrown into soups and stews happily as they are, to absorb the surrounding flavours. The most commonly available type is plain, although I sometimes use smoked. Both can be found in the refrigerated aisles of the supermarket and come sealed in water.

They don't need much in the way of special treatment, but if you're frying them, you'll need to drain the water from the tofu so it doesn't spit in the pan and crisps up nicely. The easiest way to do this is to slide a clean hand underneath the tofu block, like a pizza paddle, and place the other over the top. Over the sink, apply gentle pressure to squeeze out as much water as possible, then place the tofu on some kitchen paper, swaddle it and leave for 5 minutes.

To fry it, cut it into pieces, and use a non-stick pan and a little oil. Once in the pan, leave well alone for a few minutes to allow the tofu to brown — this is the key to caramelizing it. Don't panic if it sticks; it should come free once cooked. Sometimes it is worth dredging your tofu pieces in a thin coating of seasoned cornflour, not only to guarantee crispiness but also so that a sauce properly coats and sticks to it, as with the chilli tofu recipe on page 177.

Medium-firm tofu

This is useful to throw into braised dishes or other dishes that don't involve frying (it can fall apart easily when fried), but I tend to stick to firm

or extra-firm tofu due to its versatility and the fact that I always have some in the door of the fridge.

Silken tofu

Silken or soft tofu is fragile, creamy and dairy-like. I love to eat it with a spoon with a crunchy, tart and tangy dressing over the top (as in my silken tofu with pine nuts and pickled chillies on page 167). It also makes a fantastic spiced scramble (see page 164), which can be served on toast, and is perfect for throwing into a blender to make a sauce or a wonderful vegan mayonnaise (see page 255).

Silken tofu can be bought in long-life cartons in big supermarkets or fresh from the fridge in Asian supermarkets. When you're ready to use it, handle it as gently as a baby if you want to keep the block intact. To remove it from the carton in one piece, use a steady hand and a pair of scissors to slice along the carton edges. If you're using it for any other reason, you needn't be quite so cautious. As with the other types of tofu, you'll need to drain the water from it: place the tofu on a plate and leave for 10 minutes or so, then tip the water away before using.

A little note on tempeh

Tempeh isn't technically tofu, but it's Indonesia's own soybean product, made by compressing fermented soybeans together in a block. Like tofu, it doesn't have a strong flavour, but it is earthier, nuttier and a much heartier ingredient. It's not particularly easy to find here in the UK. Some health food shops stock it in the refrigerated section, but you might also find it in a jar. I enjoy it pan-fried with pak choi and tomato sambal (see page 168).

SCRAMBLED TOFU AKURI

V

Scrambled tofu is not a poor substitute for scrambled eggs but a genuine contender; silken tofu's mild personality makes it a perfect vehicle for louder Indian flavours. Here I've cooked the scrambled tofu akuri-style, which is how the Parsi community eat their scrambled eggs – using the holy trinity of ginger, garlic and chilli, seasoned with cumin and fresh coriander.

Serves 2 /

- **500g silken tofu**
- **½ tsp cumin seeds**
- **2 tbsp rapeseed oil,** plus extra to serve
- **1 large red onion,** very finely chopped
- **1 green finger chilli,** very finely chopped
- **1 clove of garlic,** crushed
- **1cm ginger,** peeled and grated
- **1 medium sweet vine tomato (70g),** finely chopped
- **2 tbsp finely chopped coriander**
- **½ tsp ground turmeric**
- **½ tsp salt**
- **4 slices of bread,** toasted, to serve

Line a sieve with kitchen paper or a clean cloth, carefully place the tofu in the sieve and allow to drain over a bowl for at least 10 minutes. Place the cumin seeds in a pestle and mortar and crush to a coarse powder.

Heat the oil in a non-stick frying pan and, when hot, add the ground cumin seeds. Stir-fry for a minute until the smell rises, then add the onion. Fry for 8 minutes until soft, sweet and browning, and add the chilli, garlic and ginger. Fry for 2 minutes, then add the tomato, coriander, turmeric and salt.

Take the tofu and crush it between your fingers into the pan (or mash it in the pan with a potato masher). Cook for a few more minutes, until the tofu is piping hot and well mixed with the other ingredients, then serve immediately on toast, drizzled with oil if you wish, alongside ketchup and a pot of chai.

SCRAMBLED TOFU AKURI

SILKEN TOFU with pine nuts and pickled chillies

V

Silken tofu is so named because it is passed through silk and is the most delicate of all the tofus both in flavour and texture. This recipe is loosely based on a memorable encounter I had with a silken tofu dish at a restaurant called My Neighbours the Dumplings in east London. The fragility of the tofu contrasted wonderfully with a brute of a dressing: hot and sour with pickled chillies, salty with soy and crunchy with toasted pine nuts.

note / Buy fresh silken tofu if you can, but if you can only find long-life tofu, make sure you cut carefully along the edges of the carton and open the pack gently so as not to break it up. Pickled chillies can be bought in jars from most supermarkets.

Serves 4 as a starter

/

400g silken tofu
2 tbsp toasted sesame oil
1 tsp white wine vinegar
1½ tbsp light soy sauce
½ tbsp brown rice syrup
½ tbsp rapeseed oil
2 spring onions, green part only, finely

Remove the tofu from its packaging, put on a plate and leave for 10 minutes or so, then tip the water away. Place the drained tofu on a nice serving plate with a lip, as things are about to get saucy.

In a medium-sized bowl, combine the sesame oil, vinegar, soy sauce, brown rice syrup and 2 tablespoons of hot water. Whisk with a fork to mix.

Put the rapeseed oil into a pan over a high heat and, when hot, add the spring onions, pine nuts and

chopped
50g pine nuts
2 red pickled chillies, finely sliced
10g fresh coriander, finely sliced

pickled chillies. Fry for 2 minutes, stirring every now and then, being very careful not to burn the mixture.

Very carefully (as it may spit), tip the hot pine nuts into the sesame oil mixture along with the coriander. Mix well, then pour over the tofu and serve.

SILKEN TOFU WITH PINE NUTS AND PICKLED CHILLIES

TEMPEH with pak choi and tomato sambal

V

I wasn't sure I would fall in love with tempeh, but after seeing a particularly tantalizing photo of it looking crisp and delicious in *Fire Islands*, Eleanor Ford's book on Indonesian food, I was emboldened to give it a go. And I'm pleased to report I've found room for it in my heart, particularly in this recipe, where the tempeh is fried to give it crunch then added to tomatoes, garlic and sweet soy, or kecap manis sauce – with some greens stirred in at the final minute. It's a very satisfying one-pan meal with some rice alongside.

note / Tempeh can be found in health food shops or online. The vacuum-packed stuff is much better than the jarred tempeh. Kecap manis is also available online or from Asian supermarkets – or to make your own, see page 256.

Serves 2 /

400g tempeh, each slice cut into 2 triangles
4 tbsp rapeseed oil
4 shallots, very finely chopped
5 fat cloves of garlic, crushed
1 lemongrass stick, tough outer leaves

First, fry the tempeh. Line a plate with kitchen paper and heat the oil in a non-stick frying pan for which you have a lid. When hot, add the slices of tempeh. Cook for around 2 minutes, until crispy and golden brown, then flip on to the other side and cook for a further 2 minutes. Take off the heat, lever the tempeh out using a fish slice (leaving the oil behind) and place on the plate to drain.

discarded, very finely chopped

2 bird's-eye chillies

4 vine tomatoes (250g), chopped

¾ tsp salt

1 tbsp kecap manis

250g pak choi, tailed and shredded lengthways

Reheat the oil in the same pan over a medium heat and add the shallots. Cook for 8 minutes until browning, then add the garlic, lemongrass and chillies. Cook for 3 to 4 minutes, until the raw smell of the garlic has gone and the shallots are crispy, then add the tomatoes and stir to mix.

Cook the tomatoes for 8 minutes until you have a delicious soft paste. If it starts to dry out, add a couple of tablespoons of water. Turn the heat right down, stir in the salt and kecap manis, and place the triangles of tempeh back into the pan. Carefully mix again and layer over the shredded pak choi. Turn the heat up, pop the lid on and cook for 2 minutes.

Take off the heat and transfer to two plates or a serving platter and eat alongside hot rice.

TEMPEH WITH PAK CHOI AND TOMATO SAMBAL

MUSHROOM MAPO TOFU

V

Mapo tofu is a well-loved Sichuanese dish that originated in Chengdu centuries ago. The fact that it is still served in most Sichuan restaurants (and weekly in the Sodha household) gives you some idea of its popularity. My version of this famous dish is made with meaty shiitake mushrooms, leek and broth, all layered over with bright Sichuan peppercorns and a magical sauce (toban djan) made of fermented broad beans. The result is flavour amplified – and that never grows old.

note / Many big supermarkets stock Lee Kum Kee chilli bean sauce (a fermented broad bean paste). The salted fermented black beans, however, are not so easily found: look online or in Chinese supermarkets. If you can't find them, just leave them out and season the dish to taste.

Serves 4 /

- **1½ tsp Sichuan peppercorns**
- **2 tbsp rapeseed oil**
- **3 cloves of garlic,** crushed
- **1.5cm ginger,** peeled and grated
- **200g fresh shiitake mushrooms,** finely chopped
- **1 large leek (400g),** cut into thin rounds

Put the Sichuan peppercorns into a mortar and grind well. Take a sniff and revel in their strange and wonderful grapefruit smell.

Heat the rapeseed oil in a large frying pan on a medium flame. Once hot, add the garlic and ginger, and stir-fry for 2 minutes. Add the mushrooms, cook for 6 minutes, then add the leek and stir-fry for a further 2 minutes, until the leek softens and unravels. Transfer the vegetables to a bowl.

- **2 tbsp toasted sesame oil**
- **2 tbsp chilli bean sauce**
- **1 tbsp dark soy sauce**
- **2 tsp salted fermented black beans,** rinsed and chopped
- **400g firm tofu,** drained and cut into 1.5cm cubes
- **500ml vegan vegetable stock**
- **1½ tbsp cornflour,** mixed with 1½ tbsp water
- **1 spring onion,** cut into wispy long strips

Put the sesame oil, ground Sichuan peppercorns, chilli bean sauce, soy sauce and black beans into the same pan and fry for a couple of minutes, until the oil separates. Add the tofu, stir to coat, then return the vegetables to the pan. Pour over the stock, bring to the boil, then stir in the cornflour paste and heat until the sauce thickens. Take off the heat and transfer to a serving dish. Garnish with the spring onion strips and serve with plain white rice.

MUSHROOM MAPO TOFU

CELERIAC, TOFU AND KALE GADO GADO

V

Celeriac takes the prize as autumn's most flexible root: it can be mashed, barbecued, grilled or eaten raw. Granted, this bulbous, warty fellow won't win awards for looks, and you might need to give its mud-filled crevices a bit of attention, but it's worth it. In this dish, a warm Indonesian salad, I've roasted it, making it charred and crispy, as well as sweet and tender, which perfectly balances the punchy flavours of a classic gado gado dressing, with its peanuts, chillies and tamarind. Gado gado means 'mix mix', which are not bad words to live by in the kitchen (don't get stuck in a rut).

note / I used a seasoned smoked tofu. If yours is unsalted, you might need to sprinkle with a little salt before or after frying.

Serves 4 as a main /

1 small celeriac (600g), peeled, halved and cut into 0.5cm slices
600g Charlotte potatoes, quartered
salt
4 tbsp rapeseed oil
200g kale, ribs discarded, leaves roughly torn

Preheat the oven to 200°C fan/220°C/425°F/gas 7. Put the celeriac, potatoes, a teaspoon of salt and 2 tablespoons of oil into a roasting tray, toss with your hands to coat everything in oil, then spread out into one flat layer. Roast for 25 minutes, until the celeriac and potatoes have burnished edges.

Meanwhile, prepare the kale. In a large bowl, massage a teaspoon of salt and a tablespoon of oil

1 x 200g pack of smoked tofu, cut into 0.5cm-thick slices

For the gado gado dressing /

150g chunky peanut butter
2 tsp dark brown sugar
2 tbsp tamarind paste
2 bird's-eye chillies, chopped
1 tbsp soy sauce
½ a clove of garlic, crushed

into the kale for a few minutes, until the leaves start to soften, then set aside.

Put all the dressing ingredients into a blender with 150ml of water and pulse until smooth. (You may need a little more water, depending on the thickness of your peanut butter.)

Spread the kale in a single layer on top of the celeriac and potatoes, then return the tray to the oven for 8 to 10 minutes, turning the leaves halfway through so they cook evenly (and to ensure they don't burn). The kale is ready when it has started to dry out and is crunchy to the touch. Remove from the oven and leave to one side.

Finally, in a non-stick frying pan over a medium flame, heat the last tablespoon of oil and, when hot, add the tofu and fry for a minute on each side, until golden brown. To assemble the salad, layer the roast celeriac and potato with the tofu slices and crunchy kale on a platter, then drizzle over the gado gado dressing and serve.

CELERIAC, TOFU AND KALE GADO GADO

HONEY, SOY AND GINGER BRAISED TOFU

VO

I don't have a restaurant, but if I did, this would be on my 'specials' board because it's delicious and I'd want you to try it. This is a rogue version of the Korean braised tofu called dubu jorim. The rogue ingredient is pear, which adds lovely body and a sweetness to the dish. This dish goes well with steamed broccoli and rice.

note / I doubled this recipe when it was photographed, so there is more sauce in the photo than you'll get if you cook one batch (but feel free to double the whole recipe to feed 4 or just the sauce if you like your tofu saucy).

Serves 2 as a main /

- **1 x 280g pack of extra-firm tofu**
- **2 tbsp light soy sauce**
- **1½ tbsp honey** (or brown rice syrup if vegan)
- **3 cloves of garlic,** crushed
- **1.5cm ginger,** peeled and grated
- **1 conference pear,** grated
- **4 spring onions,** finely chopped, whites and greens separated

Lightly press the tofu block between your hands over the sink to get rid of as much water as possible, then wrap in kitchen paper and leave to one side.

Place the soy sauce, honey, garlic, ginger, pear, spring onion whites, sesame oil, gochujang and 1 tablespoon of water into a bowl and whisk to mix. Remove the tofu from the kitchen paper and cut into 1cm-thick slices.

Coat the bottom of a large non-stick frying pan with the rapeseed oil and line a plate with a couple of sheets of kitchen paper. Heat the oil until it reaches

2 tbsp toasted sesame oil
1½ tsp gochujang paste
2 tbsp rapeseed oil
a handful of black and white sesame seeds, to serve

smoking point and fry the tofu slices for 8 minutes until golden on both sides. Remove the tofu to the plate, allowing the paper to absorb some of the excess oil.

Remove all but a tablespoon of oil from the pan. Add the soy and honey sauce and stir for a minute, then put the tofu back into the pan and cook for 5 minutes until the sauce reduces and becomes glossy and thick.

To serve, place the tofu in a serving dish, pour the sauce over the top and sprinkle with the sesame seeds and remaining spring onion greens.

HONEY, SOY AND GINGER BRAISED TOFU

CHILLI TOFU

V

Something happens to me when I get within 10 miles of Leicester. I crave chilli paneer: I swear I can smell it the closer I get to the city. This Pavlovian response was forged over years travelling with my parents from Lincolnshire to Leicester to shop for spices and saris. At 10 years old, these trips bored me, so my parents regularly employed bribes to keep my sister and me from getting up to no good. Top of the list was a chilli paneer washed down with a carton of neon-orange Rubicon mango juice.

Chilli paneer is Indo-Chinese in origin (the first Indo-Chinese restaurant opened in Kolkata just 85 years ago), a fairly new cuisine that has found its way into the hearts and bellies of all Indians. In this vegan version, I've used tofu instead of paneer, fried it until crisp, then doused it in garlic, chillies, tomato, soy and sugar until sticky, hot, sweet and sour. There is nothing not to like: it is brazenly addictive stuff.

Serves 4 /

800g firm tofu, drained and cut into 3cm cubes
cornflour
rapeseed oil
2 tsp cumin seeds, coarsely ground
1 brown onion, diced

Spread the tofu cubes on a large plate and dust with cornflour, turning them to coat. Take a deep frying pan with a lid, add enough oil to come 0.5cm up the sides, and heat over a medium flame. Line a plate with kitchen towel, to place the fried tofu on.

Shake any excess cornflour off the tofu, then put half the tofu into the hot oil. Fry for 3 minutes, turning

6 cloves of garlic, crushed

3cm ginger, peeled and grated

4 green finger chillies: 2 very finely chopped, 2 slit down their length

¼ tsp ground black pepper

2 tbsp tomato puree

2 tbsp light soy sauce

2 tsp caster sugar

¾ tsp salt

2 peppers (1 red and 1 green, ideally), cut into 1cm slices

regularly with tongs, until golden, then transfer to the paper-lined plate and repeat with the remaining tofu.

Drain all but 2 tablespoons of oil from the pan, then fry the cumin and onion for 10 to 12 minutes, until soft and sweet. Add the garlic, ginger and chillies, fry for 5 minutes, then add the pepper, tomato puree, soy sauce, sugar and salt. Stir to mix, cook for 5 minutes, then add the pepper strips and 100ml of water. Cover and leave to cook for 8 minutes, stirring every now and then, and adding more water if need be: there should be just enough 'sauce' to coat the tofu.

When the peppers are soft, return the tofu to the pan, turn the heat up, and stir to coat the tofu in sauce. Stir-fry for 5 minutes, then take off the heat.

Serve by itself if you're Indian, or with chapattis, greens or a leafy salad if you're not.

CHILLI TOFU

SMOKED TOFU, MUSHROOM AND ALMOND KHEEMA

V

When it's damp and chilly outside, I turn for warmth to a gaudy, floral notebook of recipes and stories I've collected from my travels in India. One of my husband's favourite dishes is the kheema from the Olympia Coffee House, a Mumbai institution where time goes by as slowly as the ceiling fans. It's a softly spiced, sweet mince, flecked with herbs and best eaten doused in lime juice with thick slices of white bread. I've created this vegan version to transport us all there, for one meal at least.

note / Smoked tofu comes both seasoned and unseasoned. In the recipe below, I used seasoned, so if yours isn't, you may need to bump up the salt. You'll need a food processor for this recipe.

Serves 4 /

650g chestnut mushrooms, roughly chopped
200g smoked tofu, chopped
rapeseed oil
1 white onion, finely diced
4cm ginger, peeled and grated
6 cloves of garlic, crushed

Place the mushrooms in a food processor and pulse to a coarse mince, but be careful not to take them too far and turn them into soup. Scrape into a bowl, then blitz the tofu to the same size as the mushrooms and add to the bowl.

Heat 3 tablespoons of oil in a large frying pan over a medium flame and, when hot, fry the white onion, stirring often, for 10 minutes, until translucent and browning. Add the ginger, garlic and chillies, stir-fry

3 green finger chillies, chopped (or to taste)
100g ground almonds
1 tsp garam masala
1½ tsp ground cumin
1½ tsp ground coriander
½ tsp ground turmeric
¾ tsp salt
200g frozen petit pois, defrosted
10g fresh mint
15g fresh coriander

To serve /

8 bread rolls
1 red onion, very finely chopped
1 lime
optional: mustard oil

for 2 minutes, then add the almonds and stir-fry for 4 minutes, until they're a shade darker.

Add the ground spices and salt, mix to combine, then add the mushrooms and tofu, mix again and leave to cook for 10 to 12 minutes, until the mushrooms have reduced. Finally, stir in the petit pois, cook for 2 minutes, then take off the heat. Pick the mint leaves and finely chop, then finely chop the coriander stems and leaves and stir it all through.

Cut the bread rolls in two and fry the halves over a high heat in a drizzle of oil until crisp and warm. Serve the kheema alongside the buns on individual plates. Top with the red onion, squeeze over the lime, and finish with a drizzle of mustard oil, if using.

SMOKED TOFU, MUSHROOM AND ALMOND KHEEMA

SPRING VEGETABLE BUN CHA

V

Years ago, when I worked in an office, one of my favourite lunchtime routines was to buy a bun cha noodle salad from a Vietnamese cafe on Theobald's Road in London. Life has moved on and my office is now my home, but when it comes to lunchtime, this is still one of my favourite things to make.

The key to a great bun cha, in my opinion, is the sweet-and-sour nuoc cham dressing, but the herb and peanut garnish also adds a lot to the overall magic, so don't leave that out.

Serves 4 /

200g red cabbage (around ⅓), finely shredded
rapeseed oil
4 cloves of garlic, cut into paper-thin slices
3 bird's-eye chillies, thinly sliced
100ml soy sauce
3 tbsp lime juice (from 2 limes)
2 tbsp caster sugar
400g extra-firm tofu
salt and ground black pepper
10 spring onions, thinly sliced
250g peas or mixed peas and broad beans

Put the cabbage into a medium-sized heatproof bowl. Heat 2 tablespoons of oil in a small saucepan over a low heat and, when hot, add the garlic and chillies. Stir-fry for 2 minutes until the garlic is fragrant, then add the soy sauce, lime juice, sugar and 8 tablespoons of water. Bring to the boil, take off the heat and pour over the cabbage.

Lightly press the tofu block between your hands over the sink to extract as much water as possible. Wrap the squeezed tofu in a few sheets of kitchen paper and press down gently to absorb the excess moisture then cut into 3cm cubes. Line a plate with kitchen paper. Heat 2 tablespoons of oil in a non-stick frying pan on a medium flame, then add the tofu cubes (in batches, if need be) and leave to fry undisturbed for 4 minutes, until a crust forms. Turn

200g watercress, tough stems discarded, chopped
250g rice vermicelli noodles
a large handful of salted peanuts, smashed
a handful of fresh coriander, finely chopped
a handful of fresh mint, finely chopped

the tofu and fry until golden on all sides, adding more oil if need be. Season with salt and pepper, then transfer to the lined plate.

In the same frying pan, heat 2 tablespoons of oil on a high flame, then add the spring onions and fry for 6 minutes, until soft. Add the peas, beans (if using) and a scant ½ teaspoon of salt, stir-fry for 2 minutes, then add the watercress. Briefly cook until wilted, then turn off the heat. Boil the kettle, soak the noodles according to the packet instructions, then drain.

Divide the noodles, tofu and veg between four bowls. Put a little cabbage in each bowl, then ladle as much of its pickling liquid over the top as you would like. Garnish with the smashed peanuts and herbs, then serve.

SPRING VEGETABLE BUN CHA

GRAM
FLOUR
بیسن
बेसन
500g 1.1lb

flour & eggs

When there are flour and eggs, there is always a meal. Because of this, they have become the beating heart of my kitchen – and many others around the world. They are universal ingredients.

But as you travel, the way they are used varies wildly. In the West, in French cuisine, for example, there is the grand tradition of boulangeries and patisseries. Walk down the streets of Paris on any given morning and you will see the locals clutching their daily bread.

In the East, the use of flour and eggs is more varied and subtle, and the curious cook or eater has to look a little harder. I think this is for two reasons. First, in most countries across East and South East Asia the primary crop is rice, not wheat. Second, most homes in the East don't rely on the ovens which we in the West all have in our homes by default. Even in the fast-growing Indian middle classes, the nearest you may find to an oven would be an 'OTG' – an oven, toaster and grill – that looks a bit like a microwave and sits on top of the counter asking to be loved but often ignored by the home cook. Instead, the Asian home cook prefers to cook on the stove – meaning the dishes the East more commonly associate with flour and eggs are pancakes and omelettes.

Eastern techniques are both familiar and different: a Japanese tamagoyaki (egg tamago roll) is made in a similar way to an omelette, for example, in which eggs are beaten, seasoned (in the case of tamagoyaki, with mirin and soy) and cooked in a pan, the difference in technique being that the egg is cooked in thin layers, rolled up and sliced, ready to be picked up with chopsticks, tucked away into bento boxes or used to top sushi (see page 202 for my version).

Similarly, the okonomiyaki, a Japanese pancake, is not a world away from an Italian frittata, only the okonomiyaki tends to include a little flour and cabbage and is served drizzled with mayonnaise and okonomiyaki sauce (see page 201).

Vietnam's most famous pancake is made not with wheat and cow's milk but rice flour and coconut milk (see page 197). In Sri Lanka, baked goods, like the seeni sambol bun (see page 188) – a yeasted bun filled with a fiery onion condiment – are a result of British, Portuguese and Dutch colonization, each wave changing the culinary landscape dish by dish.

Many of the recipes in this chapter are a showcase of what happens when an Eastern flavour meets a familiar Western technique.

A final word on eggs: buy the best you can afford. The best eggs come from the happiest hens with good diets and plenty of room to roam – either free-range hens or those reared on organic farms.

Recipe List

MASHED POTATO PARATHA with a quick lemon pickle

SEENI SAMBOL BUNS

KIMCHI PANCAKES with a spinach salad

SODHA FAMILY MASALA OMELETTE

TOMATO, PISTACHIO AND SAFFRON TART

VIETNAMESE COCONUT PANCAKES

SUN HOUSE CHILLI EGGS

SWEETHEART CABBAGE OKONOMIYAKI

EGG TAMAGO ROLLS with wasabi mayo

BOMBAY ROLLS

LEEK AND CHARD MARTABAK

KOREAN EGG BREAD

MASHED POTATO PARATHA with a quick lemon pickle

VO

Beige food has had a difficult few years. We have become so obsessed with what our food looks like that we sometimes forget that what really matters is how it tastes. Aloo (potato) paratha, one of my all-time favourite Indian dishes, will never win a beauty contest, but it is proof that beige can also be brilliant.

note / This recipe is an adapted version of one originally published in the *Guardian*. I've made it easier and quicker by mixing mashed potato and flour together to form a dough, rather than stuffing the dough with potato as is traditional.

Makes 8 /

For the pickle /

2 unwaxed lemons
2 tbsp rapeseed oil
½ tsp black mustard seeds
1 clove of garlic, thinly sliced
1 red chilli, finely chopped
½ tsp salt

For the parathas /

500g floury potatoes (such as Maris Piper), peeled and cut into 3cm chunks
2 tbsp rapeseed oil
1 tsp salt

First make the pickle. Top and tail 1 lemon, cut it into quarters, then, using your sharpest knife, cut each quarter into very thin slices, removing any pips along the way. Put the slices into a bowl and juice the other lemon over the top. On a very low flame, heat the oil in a lidded frying pan. Add the mustard seeds and garlic, and when the garlic turns pale gold, add the red chilli, lemon slices, lemon juice and ½ teaspoon of salt. Stir, cover and leave to cook for 5 minutes. Remove the lid, cook for 2 to 3 minutes more, until the oil starts to split from the lemons, then take off the heat and cool.

Bring a pan of water up to a rolling boil. Drop in the potatoes and cook for 12 minutes, or until tender. Drain and, when dry, put back into the same pan. Pour the oil for the parathas into the pan and mash

4cm ginger, peeled and grated

1½ green finger chillies, very finely chopped

3 tbsp finely chopped fresh coriander

1 red onion, finely diced

½ tsp cumin seeds

200g plain flour, plus more for dusting

yoghurt, non-dairy if vegan, to serve

the potatoes really well. Add the salt, ginger, green chillies, coriander, red onion and cumin seeds, and mix together. Then add the flour and knead together with your hands until it forms a uniform ball of dough. Lightly flour a surface and lay out a large sheet of greaseproof paper. Cut the dough ball in half, then cut each half into 4 to make 8 equal pieces. Take a piece and roll it out to a circle about 14cm in diameter (dipping in flour where necessary), then transfer to the greaseproof paper and repeat.

Heat a teaspoon of oil in a shallow non-stick frying pan and, when hot, lay the paratha in. Cook for around 1½ minutes on each side, or until blackened in places and there are no uncooked, doughy spots. As the pan starts to heat up the parathas will cook more quickly and you may need to reduce the cooking time or heat. Serve with the lemon pickle and a dollop of cold yoghurt.

MASHED POTATO PARATHA WITH A QUICK LEMON PICKLE

SEENI SAMBOL BUNS

VO

Seeni sambol is one of Sri Lanka's most delightful offerings: a sweet onion chutney made with cinnamon, cloves, chilli and tamarind. Here it is stuffed into a small pocket of dough enriched with coconut milk, then baked to form a soft, delicious bun.

Makes 8 /

For the seeni sambol /

2 tbsp rapeseed oil
500g red onions, finely sliced
2 tsp Kashmiri chilli powder
½ tsp ground cinnamon
¼ tsp ground cloves
1½ tsp tamarind paste
scant 1 tsp salt

For the buns /

200ml coconut milk, plus 1 tbsp
45g coconut oil
2 tsp caster sugar
1 tsp salt
500g plain white flour, plus extra for dusting
2 tsp quick dried yeast
optional: 1 egg, to glaze

First make the seeni sambol. Put the rapeseed oil into a lidded saucepan over a medium heat. When hot, add the onions, chilli powder, cinnamon, cloves, tamarind and salt and cook for 3 minutes, until the spices smell potent and the onions are softening. Add 2 tablespoons of water and reduce the heat to its lowest, cover with the lid and cook for 30 minutes, stirring every 10 minutes or so, and adding a few more tablespoons of water if it feels dry. The onions should become a dark, treacly mass. Once cooked, leave to cool.

In a small pan over a low flame, melt together 200ml of coconut milk, the coconut oil, sugar and salt. Once the sugar has dissolved take off the heat and leave to cool.

Put the flour and yeast into a large bowl and mix well. Add 80ml of lukewarm water and the cooled coconut milk mixture, and bring together into a coarse dough. Dust your work surface with a sprinkle of flour, turn out the dough and knead for 10 minutes until smooth and springy. Place the dough back in the mixing bowl, cover with a clean

tea towel and leave for 30 minutes in a relatively warm place until almost doubled in size. Preheat the oven to 200°C fan/220°C/425°F/gas 7 and line a baking tray with baking paper.

Tip the dough on to your work surface. Divide into 8 equal pieces, each weighing around 100g. Shape each piece into a rough ball, then press each ball into a flat disc about the size of your palm. Put a heaped tablespoon of seeni sambol into the middle of one disc, bring the sides up and over the filling and twist to create a sealed bun. Place seam side down on the tray, and repeat with the remaining dough.

Cover the buns again with the clean tea towel and leave to prove for 10 minutes in a warm place. If you're using the egg, mix together with the tablespoon of coconut milk and brush each bun with the mixture; if you're not using the egg, just use the coconut milk. Bake in the hot oven for 20 minutes until golden, then leave to cool on a wire rack before devouring.

SEENI SAMBOL BUNS

KIMCHI PANCAKES with a spinach salad

V

When I first discovered kimchi, I nearly ate a whole jar in a single salty, spicy and sour sitting. A fully formed addict, I went in search of recipes, and became acquainted with the kimchi jeon at Oshibi, a Korean restaurant in York. A jeon is a Korean pancake that forgivingly absorbs tofu and most vegetables you might throw at it, but still (quite considerately) becomes crisp, given enough time in the pan. The dipping sauce doubles up as the salad dressing in this recipe, making the salad perfect to throw on top of the pancakes.

Serves 2 as a main or 4 as part of a larger meal /

250g kimchi (suitable for vegans)
80g rice flour
80g plain flour
1 tsp salt
200g firm tofu, drained and cut into thin slivers
80g bean sprouts (or a big handful)
5 spring onions, trimmed and finely chopped
120g baby-leaf spinach

Tip the kimchi into a sieve over a measuring jug, and press down to extract as much juice as possible. Measure the juice and, if need be, top it up to 200ml with tap water. Roughly chop the drained kimchi.

In a large bowl, use a fork to whisk the flours and salt, then stir in the kimchi juice. Add the kimchi, tofu, bean sprouts and most of the spring onions – save a small handful of the onions for the sauce – and stir again. The batter should be wet but scoopable. Leave to stand for 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, make the dipping sauce. In a small bowl, mix the soy sauce, sesame oil, vinegar, chilli flakes, the reserved spring onions and the sesame seeds.

rapeseed oil

For the dipping sauce

/

3 tbsp dark soy sauce

2 tbsp toasted sesame oil

1½ tbsp rice vinegar

2 tsp chilli flakes

1 tsp toasted sesame seeds, plus extra to garnish

Shred the spinach and put into a salad bowl. Add 2 tablespoons of dipping sauce and toss to coat.

To cook the pancakes, heat ½ tablespoon of oil in a medium frying pan (ideally non-stick) on a medium flame and swirl it around to coat the base of the pan. Pour in a quarter of the batter and spread it out with the back of a spoon until it's 15cm in diameter. Cook for 3 to 5 minutes, until the bottom is crisp and golden, then flip and cook on the other side until that, too, is crisp and golden. Transfer to a warm place, cover with foil, and repeat with the remaining batter, adding a little extra oil to the pan for each pancake, if need be.

Serve warm with a big handful of spinach salad scattered on top and sprinkled with sesame seeds. Serve the sauce in little bowls on the side.

KIMCHI PANCAKES WITH A SPINACH SALAD

SODHA FAMILY MASALA OMELETTE

Every Sunday, Mum used to make us kids a masala omelette each, served with toast and chai in a much-treasured flowery Royal Doulton teapot. But since acquiring husbands, children and dogs, we've needed a bigger omelette. This masala omelette is similar to the original, but made in much the same way as a frittata: in a single pan and with more eggs, finished off under the grill.

note / You'll need a non-stick frying pan that can go under a grill. A 24–25cm diameter pan is perfect.

Serves 4 /

- **1 tbsp rapeseed oil**
- **2 tbsp unsalted butter**
- **1 large red onion,** finely chopped
- **1–2 green finger chillies** (to taste), very finely chopped
- **2 cloves of garlic,** crushed
- **⅔ tsp salt**
- **250g chestnut mushrooms,** chopped
- **8 medium eggs**
- **20g fresh coriander,** finely sliced

Heat the oil and butter in a pan over a medium heat. When hot and foaming, add the onion, chillies, garlic and salt. Cook for 6 minutes, until the onion is translucent and the garlic fragrant, then add the mushrooms. Spread the mushrooms out in one layer to allow them to get crispy. You want the water to evaporate and the mushrooms to start to brown, which should take around 12 minutes.

Meanwhile, switch the grill on to the maximum setting. Crack the eggs into a bowl, beat well with a fork, mix in the coriander and leave to one side.

When the mushrooms are brown, pour in the egg and coriander mixture. Mix quickly with a wooden spoon, then shake the pan to even the mixture out, and cook for 2 minutes. Take the pan off the stove and carefully pop it under the grill (with the handle

sticking out towards you). Cook for 2 to 3 minutes or until starting to brown on top, then take out and place on a heatproof surface. Slide a spatula around the outside and slide on to a big plate.

Serve with hot buttered toast for breakfast, or with a lemon-dressed salad for a light lunch.

SODHA FAMILY MASALA OMELETTE

TOMATO, PISTACHIO AND SAFFRON TART

VO

I believe in low-effort, high-reward cooking, especially when the weather is good and I don't want to be in the kitchen. That's when we all need shortcuts, and this tart is a good example. There's not much to the making of it: the pastry is ready-made, the nuts and coconut milk form a base at the push of a button, leaving you just the short task of frying some onions, layering the tomatoes and popping it in the oven before eating. It's very rich, so you won't need much alongside. Buy full-fat coconut milk, don't shake the can, and leave it to settle so you can scrape the thick cream from the top.

note / You can easily buy ready-made puff pastry suitable for vegans (e.g. Jus-Rol) in most supermarkets. You'll need a food processor and a large oven tray (approx. 40cm x 35cm); if you don't have a tray this big, make two half-size tarts.

Serves 4 /

rapeseed oil
2 red onions, halved and thinly sliced
2 tsp tamarind paste
salt
100g unsalted pistachio kernels
50g ground almonds

Preheat the oven to 220°C fan/240°C/475°F/gas 9. Put 3 tablespoons of oil into a large frying pan on a medium flame and, once hot, add the onions and cook for up to 15 minutes, stirring occasionally, until soft, caramelized and sweet. Stir in the tamarind paste and ¼ teaspoon of salt, then scrape into a bowl.

3 cloves of garlic, roughly chopped
1½ tsp ground cumin
1½ tsp ground coriander
¾ tsp ground cinnamon
a big pinch of saffron
200ml top of tinned coconut milk
320g puff pastry sheet
600g mixed good-quality tomatoes (such as Datterini and vine), halved or sliced

Put all the nuts, garlic, spices, saffron and ¾ teaspoon of salt into the bowl of a food processor. Open the coconut milk, scrape the 200ml of cream at the top into the bowl, then process to a smooth paste.

To build the tart, line your large baking tray with greaseproof paper and lay the pastry sheet on top. With a small knife, score a line all around the pastry 1cm away from the edge. Using a knife or the back of a large spoon, spread the pistachio paste evenly over the pastry, up to the border, then carefully spread the onion mix over the paste. Lay the tomato pieces on top (cut side up if they're in halves) – make sure they're very close to each other, because they will shrink when they cook – then drizzle with oil and sprinkle with a little salt.

Bake for 25 minutes, turning the tart once halfway through, until the tomatoes are slightly blackened and the pastry's edges have puffed up.

TOMATO, PISTACHIO AND SAFFRON TART

VIETNAMESE COCONUT PANCAKES

The Vietnamese really are masters of the mouth-watering salad. They can take raw vegetables and elevate them to heavenly places using a secret weapon, nuoc cham chay – a bright, hot, sweet and sour sauce that will wake up every neuron in your brain. Here the salad and its dressing are tucked away in a deliciously crispy coconut and turmeric pancake.

Makes 6 pancakes /

220g rice flour
¾ tsp salt
½ tsp ground turmeric
1 medium egg
400ml coconut milk
200g red cabbage (around ¼), finely shredded
2 slim carrots (150g), julienned
5 spring onions, finely chopped
40g fresh mixed herbs (Thai basil, coriander and mint), leaves picked and roughly chopped
5 tbsp lime juice (from 3 limes)
3½ tsp sugar
1½ tbsp light soy sauce
1½ bird's-eye chillies, finely chopped
2 cloves of garlic, crushed

First make the batter for the pancakes. Put the rice flour, salt, turmeric and egg into a bowl and mix together. Add the coconut milk and 175ml of water, whisk until you have a smooth batter, then leave to one side.

Next, place the cabbage, carrots, spring onions and herbs into another bowl and mix with your hands. Make the sauce by putting the lime juice, sugar, soy sauce, chillies and garlic into a jug or small bowl and mixing well. Pour two-thirds of this sauce over the veg and mix again using your hands. Pour the remaining third into a little serving bowl.

To make the pancakes, heat a teaspoon of oil in a large non-stick frying pan over a medium flame, and swirl it around the pan to coat. When the pan is very hot, pour in a ladleful of batter, swirling the pan quickly and carefully so that the batter reaches the edge. Cook for 2 to 3 minutes until golden and crisp on the bottom (test this by sliding a palette knife under the pancake; if it lifts away easily, it's ready). Slide on to a plate and repeat with the rest of

rapeseed oil

the batter, until you have 6 pancakes in total. As with all pancakes, your first one might not be perfect, but don't lose faith, you will quickly get the hang of it.

To serve, place a small handful of the salad in the middle of the pancake and roll up. Serve with the extra sauce on the side.

VIETNAMESE COCONUT PANCAKES

SUN HOUSE CHILLI EGGS

Geoffrey Dobbs is a rare breed of man. He throws great parties, he runs a renowned literary festival, he recommends books he thinks you might like. He listens, he challenges, he broadens your horizons. He's the friend everyone should have. He owns the hotel the Sun House in Galle, Sri Lanka – that's where he serves these chilli eggs. Like Geoffrey, they are simply brilliant.

Serves 2 /

2 tbsp unsalted butter
1 small red onion, very finely chopped
1–1½ green finger chillies (to taste), very finely chopped
2 cloves of garlic, crushed
200g tomatoes, finely chopped
½ tsp salt
4 medium eggs
40g grated mature Cheddar cheese
a little fresh coriander, roughly chopped

Put the butter into a large non-stick frying pan over a medium heat and, when it starts to foam, add the onion, chillies and garlic. Fry for 5 minutes until the onion softens, then add the tomatoes and salt. Fry for another 5 minutes until the tomatoes start to soften, then make four holes in the mixture using a spatula.

Gently crack the eggs into the four holes and leave to fry. When they are almost ready (i.e. the whites near the yolks are nearly set), sprinkle the cheese around the eggs, avoiding the yolks. Fry until the whites at the top of the eggs are set but the yolks still runny, sprinkle with coriander and serve immediately.

SUN HOUSE CHILLI EGGS

SWEETHEART CABBAGE OKONOMIYAKI

Okonomiyaki is a type of savoury Japanese pancake, and it means 'cooked as you like it' — which in my case means laden with lots of sauce, crispy fried onions and a smattering of fresh spring onion.

note / An 18–20cm non-stick frying pan is perfect for this pancake.

Makes 2 pancakes (to serve 2) /

For the okonomiyaki /

- 150g plain flour
- 1¼ tsp salt
- 4 medium eggs
- 300g sweetheart cabbage (around ½), shredded
- 6 spring onions, finely chopped, whites and greens separated
- 2 tbsp rapeseed oil

For the okonomiyaki sauce /

- 2½ tbsp tomato ketchup
- 2½ tbsp HP sauce
- 2½ tbsp date syrup

Whisk the flour, salt, eggs and 150ml of water together with a fork in a mixing bowl until there are no lumps and you have a smooth batter. Add the cabbage and the spring onion whites, and mix well to coat all the vegetables. Now make the okonomiyaki sauce: put the ketchup, HP sauce and date syrup into a small bowl and mix well.

To cook the okonomiyaki, heat a tablespoon of oil in a small frying pan over a medium-high flame. Add half the batter to the pan and flatten it with a spoon or spatula to help it into a circular pancake around 3cm deep. Cook the first side for 3 to 4 minutes. You should see the scraps of cabbage and batter at the edges of the pancake starting to brown and crisp. If it is browning too fast, turn down the heat a little. When it's ready, turn the okonomiyaki with a spatula (or, if you are particularly confident, toss it like a pancake) and cook on the other side for a

To serve /

mayonnaise

crispy fried onions
(shop-bought)

further 3 minutes. Turn out on to a plate, and repeat with the second half of the batter.

To serve, criss-cross the surface of the okonomiyaki with the sauce and some mayonnaise, then liberally top with crispy onions and the reserved spring onion greens.

SWEETHEART CABBAGE OKONOMIYAKI

EGG TAMAGO ROLLS with wasabi mayo

These egg rolls are made in much the same way as an omelette (here seasoned with mirin and soy), which is then rolled and sliced into bite-size pieces. I eat them for breakfast, snacks, at my desk and on picnics. In short, there's no occasion I can think of which is not made tastier by the addition of an egg tamago roll.

Serves 2 /

For the wasabi mayo /

¾ tbsp wasabi paste
3 tbsp mayonnaise
1 tsp white wine vinegar
a few black sesame seeds, to decorate

For the tamago roll /

4 medium eggs
1 tbsp light soy sauce
1 tbsp mirin
¾ tbsp black sesame seeds
a pinch of salt
rapeseed oil
2 sheets of nori

First make the wasabi mayo. In a small bowl, combine the wasabi, mayo and vinegar. Stir to mix, sprinkle over a few black sesame seeds and leave to one side.

To make the tamago batter, break the eggs into a bowl and add the soy sauce, mirin, black sesame seeds and salt. Beat well with a fork until well mixed.

Put 1 teaspoon of oil into a non-stick frying pan over a medium heat and swirl to coat the bottom of the pan. When hot, add half the egg mixture. Swirl to coat the bottom of the pan and cook for 1 minute, then place a nori sheet flat on top of the egg. Let it set for a few seconds and then, with a spatula, gently start to roll the egg from right to left. When you reach the end, slide out on to a plate and repeat.

Slice the egg rolls into 2cm-wide spirals and dunk freely into the mayonnaise.

BOMBAY ROLLS

Standing three tiers high, the magnificent Bombay sandwich is a whopper of a construction. It's available on every street corner, and each stallholder obsesses over their own special blend of spices, vegetables and chutneys, for that 'better than yours' taste. Although it's a wonder, it's also a labour of love to make at home, and so in this recipe I've attempted to embody its spirit – a sharp, hot green chutney, cheese and onion – but in a pastry roll that can be made in just minutes.

Makes 8 /

60g fresh coriander, roughly chopped
20g fresh mint, leaves picked, roughly chopped
2 tsp lemon juice
2 green finger chillies, roughly chopped
1 tsp ground cumin
1¼ tsp salt
2 tbsp rapeseed oil
plain flour, to dust
500g puff pastry block (not pre-rolled sheets)
100g extra mature Cheddar cheese, grated
½ a small red onion, very finely sliced
1 egg, beaten with a pinch of salt

Preheat the oven to 200°C fan/220°C/425°F/gas 7 and line a 22cm x 30cm baking tray with baking paper.

Put the coriander, mint, lemon juice, chillies, cumin, salt and oil into a blender, and pulse until you have a smooth chutney that is thick and spreadable. Taste: it should be hot, herby, salty and sour all at once. If it isn't, adjust as you see fit.

Sprinkle a little flour over your work surface and roll out the pastry to a 30cm square. Spread the surface of the pastry with the coriander chutney, leaving a 2.5cm strip free along the top edge (the side furthest from you). Add the Cheddar in a similarly even layer and scatter the onion over the top, then brush the exposed strip with beaten egg.

Roll the pastry in a tight spiral away from you until you have a big Swiss roll. Cut the roll into 4cm-wide pieces and lay each piece on the tray with a 5cm gap between them. Brush each cut side with egg,

then place in the hot oven and cook for 30 minutes until the tops are golden brown and caramelized. Allow to cool slightly before separating and eating.

BOMBAY ROLLS

LEEK AND CHARD MARTABAK

Depending where in the world you are, martabak are stuffed breads, pancakes or small pastries, thought to have originated from the Indian community in Yemen and spread through the Indian trading routes in the Middle East and Asia. Now they are sold by street vendors from Saudi Arabia to Singapore and Indonesia to Malaysia. Here, I've omitted the usual minced meat and used chard, leek and onions instead, all bound together with egg and the quite untraditional (but very delicious) cheese.

Serves 8 /

rapeseed oil
2 red onions, finely chopped
2 leeks, thinly sliced
6 spring onions, finely sliced
4 cloves of garlic, crushed
2cm ginger, peeled and grated
400g chard, stems chopped into 1cm pieces, leaves shredded
1 tsp salt
2 tsp ground cumin
2 tsp ground coriander
4 medium eggs
150g mature Cheddar cheese, grated
250g filo pastry (6 sheets)

Preheat the oven to 180°C fan/200°C/400°F/gas 6.

Heat 2 tablespoons of oil in a large lidded frying pan over a medium flame. When hot, add the red onions, leeks and spring onions and cook for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the whole mixture is soft and starting to brown nicely. Add the garlic, ginger and chard stems and cook for 5 minutes, then add the salt, spices and chard leaves, mix, and place the lid on the pan. Turn the heat down low and allow the chard to steam in the pan for 5 minutes. Take off the heat, remove the lid and allow to cool to room temperature.

Place the eggs and cheese in a mixing bowl and beat with a fork. Next, brush a 22cm x 32cm baking tray with oil. Lay 2 sheets of filo across the width of the tray, overlapping them slightly in the centre and allowing them to hang out of the tray at the sides. Brush these sheets with a little more oil. Lay 2 more

sheets lengthways in the tray, also making sure they hang over the ends of the tray, and brush them with oil.

Add your cooled vegetable mixture to the cheese and eggs, stirring to combine. Empty the filling into the centre of the baking tray and use the back of a spoon to level it, making sure the filling reaches each corner of the tray. Take the overhanging filo sheets and lay them over the top of the filling, as if you were wrapping a present (don't worry if they don't meet in the middle). Brush those sheets with oil, then lay another sheet lengthways over the top, brush with oil, and then lay the final sheet. Brush the top of the martabak with oil, and trim off any excess pastry around the edge. Place in the hot oven for 25 minutes, until golden brown, and brittle to the touch. Allow to cool, then cut into squares and serve.

LEEK AND CHARD MARTABAK

KOREAN EGG BREAD

Korean egg bread, or gyeran-bbang, is a popular winter street-food snack in South Korea, but it's also an incredibly moreish loaf to have lying around the kitchen for breakfast, lunch and all the times in between. In Korea, the bread is flavoured with a variety of things, from mozzarella to mayonnaise, and the eggs are cracked whole into the batter. Here I've used smoky paprika and parsley to flavour the bread and soft-boiled the eggs – meaning that you get an excellent egg cross-section when the loaf is sliced.

note / You'll need a deep 2lb/900g loaf tin for this recipe.

Serves 8 /

5 medium eggs
250g self-raising flour
75g mature Cheddar cheese, grated
1¼ tsp salt
1½ tsp baking powder
1 tsp hot smoked paprika
½ tsp chilli flakes
20g fresh parsley, leaves picked and finely chopped
100g unsalted butter, melted
240ml whole milk

Preheat the oven to 180°C fan/200°C/400°F/gas 6 and line your loaf tin with baking paper.

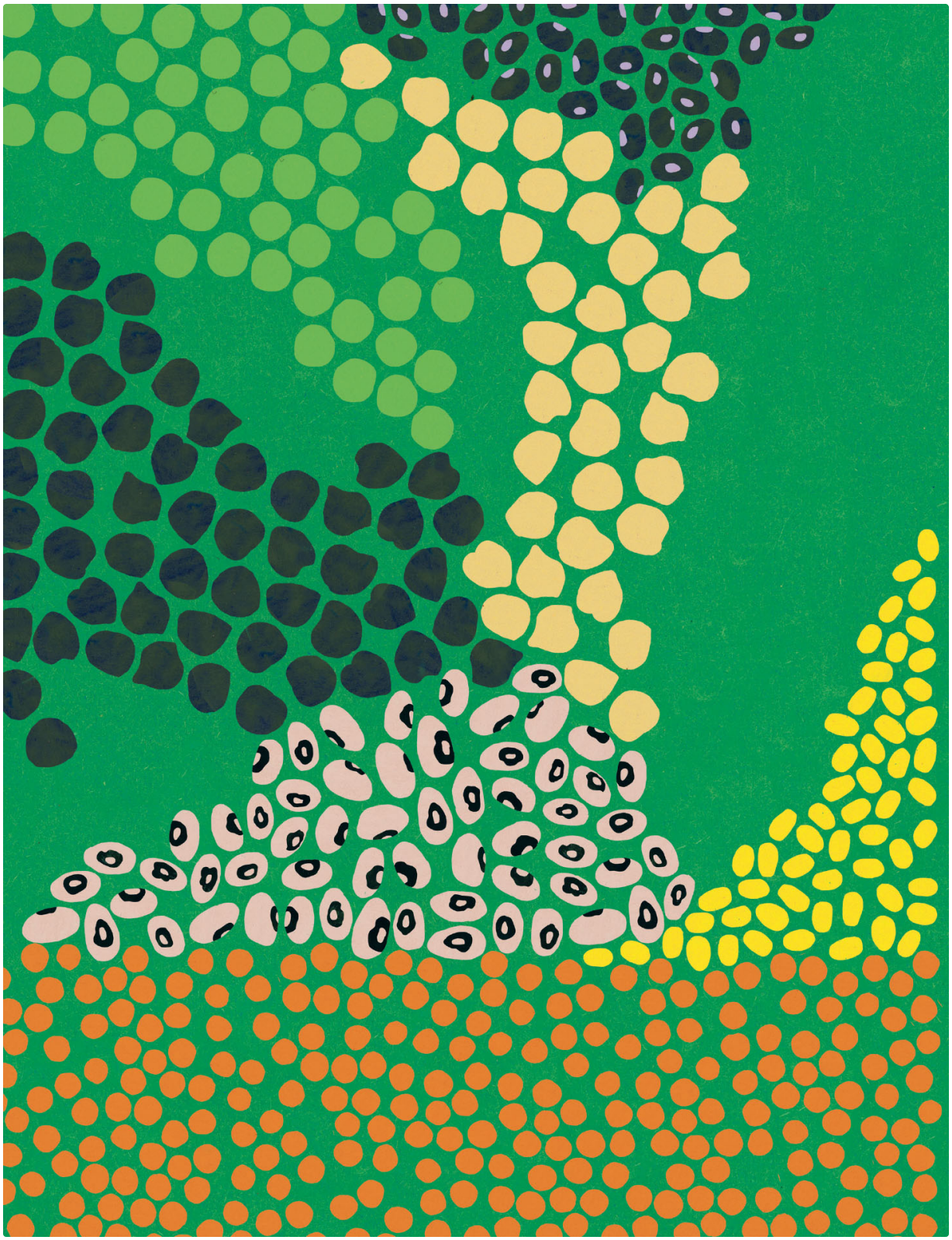
Bring a small pan of water to a rolling boil and gently lower in 3 eggs using a tablespoon. Cook them for exactly 7 minutes, then drain and remove the eggs, cool the saucepan down under the tap and fill with very cold water. Pop the eggs in to cool down until needed.

Put the flour, Cheddar, salt, baking powder, paprika, chilli flakes and parsley into a large bowl and mix well. Put the melted butter and milk into another bowl, beat the remaining 2 eggs in a separate bowl, then add them to the butter and milk. Add the wet milk mixture to the flour, mixing it in well until smooth, then pour this into the loaf tin.

Peel the boiled eggs and take a thin slice off the top and bottom of each egg (this helps them to sit next to each other in the batter). Place the eggs in a line along the length of the tin, then slowly and gently push them down into the batter, until they are just under the surface.

Put the tin into the centre of the hot oven and cook for 55 minutes, or until a skewer inserted into the cake comes out clean. Remove from the oven, leave to rest in the loaf tin for 5 minutes, then turn out on to a wire rack and leave to cool. To serve, eat warm spread with butter, or cold just by itself.

KOREAN EGG BREAD



pulses

Lentils, chickpeas and beans taste of comfort to me.

As a family, we Sodhas ate dal week in, week out, and despite leaving home a couple of decades ago I have never tired of it and still cook dal for my own family at least once a week.

I confess the dal recipes that I lean towards these days use either quick-cooking lentils, like mung dal (the yellow split insides of the mung bean) or red lentils – which both cook in under 30 minutes and don't need soaking. I am also a fan of tinned chickpeas, which I simmer so that they lose their chalkiness and become plump and soft: this is so I can spend less time in the kitchen and more at the table. Recipes where the cooking is slow but the preparation is quick also work for me – such as my black dal (see page 215), which you can leave on the stovetop to cook, stirring when you pass.

One of the biggest discoveries in researching pulses for this book was how prevalent and diverse the use of pulses is in India and just how difficult it was to find savoury pulse dishes from China, Japan, Korea and Taiwan. According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, this is because in these countries pulses are still regarded as 'exotic'. Their farming traditions revolve around wheat, rice 'and a single pulse, the soybean, whose prominence in the region has been immense'.

This fills me with excitement at what a new world of pulse dishes from these countries could look like in the future. However, as we are not yet at that point, the recipes in this chapter revolve around the countries in which they are part of everyday life: India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Burma.

Recipe List

QUICK COCONUT DAL with tomato sambol

BLACK DAL

BUNNY CHOW

BLACK-EYED BEAN AND CHICKPEA USAL

RED LENTIL RASAM with roast red cabbage

ROASTED JERUSALEM ARTICHOKE AND CHICKPEA CHAAT

CHICKPEA FLOUR CHIPS with chilli sauce

AMRITSARI POMEGRANATE CHICKPEAS

MAHAM'S DAL

QUICK COCONUT DAL with tomato sambol

V

This dal is a friend in the kitchen. I wrote the recipe just after having my daughter, when I was still a little broken and exhausted. It needs only 5 minutes' or so hands-on work before heat, time and the ingredients take care of the rest. The dal soothes while the sambol revives.

Serves 2 /

For the dal /

2 tbsp rapeseed oil
1 red onion, finely chopped
10 fresh curry leaves, plus extra to serve
2 cloves of garlic, crushed
1 green finger chilli, very finely chopped
1 lemongrass stick, cut in half on an angle
1 cinnamon stick, broken in half
150g red lentils
1/3 tsp ground turmeric
1 x 400ml tin of coconut milk
1¼ tsp salt
½ tbsp lime (from ½ a lime)

For the tomato sambol /

Warm a tablespoon of oil in a medium-sized saucepan over a medium heat and add three-quarters of the onion (reserve the rest for the sambol), the curry leaves, garlic, chilli, lemongrass and cinnamon stick. Fry for 5 minutes, then stir in the lentils and turmeric. Add the coconut milk and 400ml of water (fill up the empty coconut tin to measure this) and tip it into the pan. Bring the mixture to the boil and simmer for around 20 to 25 minutes, until the lentils are no longer chalky and are tender to the bite. Add more water if it's too thick, then season with the salt and lime.

While the dal is cooking, make the sambol. Place the desiccated coconut into a pretty heatproof bowl. Pour in 3 tablespoons of freshly boiled water and stir to mix. Add the reserved onion, chilli, tomatoes, lime and salt. Mix, taste, and add more salt to balance if need be.

To serve, fish the cinnamon and lemongrass pieces out of the dal, if you wish, and transfer to a serving bowl. Warm the final tablespoon of oil in a pan over

40g desiccated coconut
1 long red chilli, very finely chopped
100g cherry tomatoes, chopped
1 tbsp lime juice (from 1 lime)
½ tsp salt

a high heat, and when very hot add a handful of curry leaves and wait for them to crisp up, then take off the heat. Place the sambol over the top or serve on the side and tip the curry leaves over the top of the dal. Serve with rice or paratha.

QUICK COCONUT DAL WITH TOMATO SAMBOL

BLACK DAL

V

This is a vegan adaptation of my dairy-rich dal makhani (makhani means 'with butter' in Hindi). Despite this omission, it has a wonderful richness to it because the beans release a dense liquid as they cook, which binds the flavours together and gives it a gorgeous thickness. After some initial effort you can largely leave this dal to its own devices, as the longer it cooks the better.

note / You'll need to soak the beans for at least 6 hours before cooking.

Serves 4 /

- 300g whole black gram (urad beans)
- 3 tablespoons rapeseed oil
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 medium red onions, chopped
- 3cm ginger, peeled and grated
- 6 large cloves of garlic, crushed
- 1 x 400g tin of chopped tomatoes
- 2 tbsp tomato puree
- 1½ tsp salt
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- ¼ tsp ground turmeric

In a sieve, rinse the black gram in cold water until the water runs clear, then drain and put into a deep pan – the beans will double in volume while soaking. Cover with a generous amount of just-boiled water and leave to soak for anywhere between 6 and 24 hours.

Drain the soaked beans, put them back into the pan and cover with cold water. Bring to the boil, scraping off any scum that appears on top, then cook until tender – this will depend on your beans (older beans take longer to cook), so start checking after 20 minutes. Once boiled, the beans should be soft enough to crush against the side of the pan. Take off the heat and drain some of the liquid off, keeping just enough to cover the beans.

¾ tsp Kashmiri chilli powder
½ tsp garam masala
optional: 1 tsp kasuri methi (see page 115)

Meanwhile, put the oil into a large frying pan over a medium heat. When hot, add the cinnamon stick, bay leaf and onions and fry for 15 minutes, then add the ginger and garlic and fry for another 5 minutes. Stir in the tinned tomatoes and tomato puree, then leave to simmer for around 12 minutes, until the tomatoes have reduced and are starting to release oil back into the pan. Now stir in the salt and spices, including the kasuri methi if using. Cook for a couple of minutes, then add to the pot of beans. Bring to the boil, then turn the heat down to a simmer.

Stir every now and then for around 1 to 1½ hours, and when the dal looks too thick or starts to dry out, top it up with some more freshly boiled water and mix. After around an hour, the dal will start to turn dark and the beans and the tomatoes will come together into one silky rich mass. If this doesn't happen, give it some more time – you can't do this dish any harm by cooking it for a little longer.

Taste, adjust the salt and chilli if necessary. Serve alongside parathas or hot fluffy naan bread.

BLACK DAL

BUNNY CHOW

V

I'm well aware that Durban, where bunny chow hails from, is in South Africa, not Asia. But given that Durban is home to more Indians than any other city outside India, I hope you'll forgive me. Indians have been leaving the motherland for years, but they never quite give up their food culture. This has led to some legendary creations, one of which is this hollowed-out loaf, traditionally filled with a bean curry. It's now one of South Africa's most popular dishes and deserves to migrate once more, from Durban to wherever your kitchen table happens to be.

note / You will often come across tins of black chickpeas in the 'Asian' aisle of larger supermarkets – they are nutty, musky and often in salted water, so season them discriminatingly. If you can't find them, normal chickpeas will work just as well.

Serves 4 as a main /

- **4 large or 8 small bread buns**
- **3 tbsp rapeseed oil**
- **1 brown onion, finely diced**
- **1½ green finger chillies,** very finely chopped
- **3 cloves of garlic,** crushed
- **600g sweetheart cabbage,** finely

Preheat the oven to 180°C fan/200°C/400°F/gas 6. Cut off the top from each bun and scoop out the bread inside (pop this in a freezer bag and freeze for the next time you need to make breadcrumbs). Put the hollowed-out buns to one side.

In a wide frying pan with a lid, heat the oil on a medium flame, then stir-fry the onion and chillies for about 6 minutes, until soft and translucent. Add the garlic and fry, stirring, for another couple of minutes. Stir in the cabbage and 4 tablespoons of

shredded
1 tsp ground cumin
½ tsp garam masala
1 tsp ground turmeric
1¼ tsp salt
1 x 400g tin of black chickpeas, drained
200g mangetout
200g baby-leaf spinach
20g fresh coriander, finely chopped
1 lemon, cut into 8 wedges

water, pop on the lid and leave to cook for about 8 minutes, until the cabbage is soft and wilted. Stir in the cumin, garam masala, turmeric and salt. At this point, put the buns and their lids into the oven and set a timer for 8 minutes.

Add the chickpeas and mangetout to the cabbage pan, stir and leave to cook for a couple of minutes, then add the spinach handful by handful. Cover the pan again and leave to cook for about 5 minutes, until the spinach has properly wilted, then gently stir through the coriander.

Take the buns out of the oven and scoop the vegetable mixture into the cavities. Top with the lids and serve with lemon wedges to squeeze over. Encourage everyone to tear off the bread in big chunks and dip them into the curry filling.

BUNNY CHOW

BLACK-EYED BEAN AND CHICKPEA USAL

V

Despite this being a nation of curry lovers, for the most part, Indian restaurants have been serving us the same old things since the 1940s. That was when the gentlemen from Sylhet in Bangladesh, most of whom came to the UK on boats with the returning British at the end of the British Raj, embarked on a plan to serve curry on our high streets. This recipe for usal, a mixture of pulses and peas in a light, spiced tomato broth, is one I'd love to see more UK restaurants adopt.

note / You can swap the beans and pulses listed for whatever you have to hand: I particularly like sprouted mung beans in my usal, but they're not easy to find in shops and take a few days to sprout from scratch. This is best eaten with a hunk of bread for mopping up the spicy juices.

Serves 4 /

4 tbsp rapeseed oil
2 red onions, chopped
2 green finger chillies, very finely chopped
4 cloves of garlic, crushed
2 big vine tomatoes, chopped
1¾ tsp salt

Heat the oil in a pot over a high flame. When hot, add the onions and chillies and cook for 10 minutes, stirring frequently, until the onions look like pink jewels. Stir in the garlic, cook for 2 minutes, then add the tomatoes. When the tomatoes have broken down and become paste-like (around 5 minutes), add the salt and spices, and stir-fry for a minute.

1 tsp Kashmiri chilli powder
1 tsp garam masala
1 tsp ground cumin
½ tsp ground turmeric
1 x 400g tin of black-eyed beans, drained
250g frozen petit pois, defrosted
1 x 400g tin of chickpeas, drained
200g mangetout
1 tbsp lemon juice
a handful of fresh coriander leaves, finely chopped

Pour 1 litre of water into the pot, bring it to a boil, then turn down the heat to medium and leave to bubble away for 8 minutes. Stir in the beans, peas, chickpeas and mangetout, cook for about 5 minutes, then take off the heat.

Mix in the lemon juice and coriander, taste and adjust the seasoning if need be. Divide the peas and legumes between four bowls, ladle the spiced broth on top and serve.

BLACK-EYED BEAN AND CHICKPEA USAL

RED LENTIL RASAM with roast red cabbage

V

There are dals to comfort and dals to revive. Rasam is a reviver, the kind of thing I want to eat when I'm feeling sluggish. It's thinner than your average dal, brothy and buzzing with spices, with a defined, sour edge. Here, I've served it with my current addiction, roasted red cabbage, whose leaves sweeten, soften and char in the heat of the oven.

Serves 4 /

1 red cabbage, quartered
rapeseed oil
salt
2 tbsp tamarind paste
1½ tsp cumin seeds
1½ tsp coriander seeds
10 fresh curry leaves
1½ tsp mustard seeds
1 tsp Kashmiri chilli powder
½ tsp ground black pepper
5 cloves of garlic, crushed
1 x 400g tin of chopped tomatoes
250g red lentils

Preheat the oven to 180°C fan/200°C/400°F/gas 6. Put the quartered cabbage on a lined roasting tray, drizzle with oil and sprinkle with a pinch or two of salt, and roast for 35 minutes.

While the cabbage is cooking, make a tamarind dressing. In a small bowl, mix 2 teaspoons of tamarind paste, 2 teaspoons of water and a teaspoon of oil. After 25 minutes, when the cabbage is tender to the core and starting to crisp and burn at the edges, remove and brush its cut sides generously with the mixture of tamarind. Return to the oven for 10 minutes, then set aside.

To make the rasam, coarsely grind the cumin and coriander seeds with a pestle and mortar. Heat 2 tablespoons of oil in a large sauce-pan over a medium heat and, when hot, add the curry leaves, let them crackle for 10 seconds, then add the mustard seeds and let them do the same. Add the

ground spices, toast in the hot oil for 30 seconds, then add the garlic and stir-fry for around 3 minutes, until sticky and golden.

Next add the tin of tomatoes, breaking them up with the back of your spoon. Bring the sauce to a simmer, then add the lentils and 1.3 litres of water, bring up to the boil and reduce the heat to a gentle simmer. Cook for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally to make sure the lentils don't stick to the bottom of the pan. Once cooked, add 1¼ teaspoons of salt and the remaining 4 teaspoons of tamarind paste and simmer for a minute more. The texture of the rasam should be somewhere between a soup and a dal.

Cut each quarter of cabbage into 2 or 3 slices. Ladle the rasam into shallow bowls, place a couple of slices of cabbage on top, and serve alongside some steamed or boiled basmati rice if you like.

RED LENTIL RASAM with roast red cabbage

ROASTED JERUSALEM ARTICHOKE AND CHICKPEA CHAAT

VO

Chaat, for the uninitiated, means 'to lick' but translates as that sort of lip-smacking street food for which you would travel across a city, climb a mosque and crawl under an elephant. As every Indian knows, the best chaats are all about the chutneys.

note / You'll need to hop into an Indian supermarket to pick up the chaat masala and the sev (freeze any left over). You'll also need a blender. There's no need to peel the artichokes if they're scrubbed well. Use a non-dairy yoghurt if vegan.

Serves 4 /

1kg Jerusalem artichokes, scrubbed and cut into 2.5cm pieces
rapeseed oil
salt
60g fresh mint, leaves picked
30g fresh coriander
1½ green finger chillies, finely chopped
1 tbsp lemon juice
2 tbsp date syrup
2 tbsp tamarind paste
¼ tsp Kashmiri chilli powder

Preheat the oven to 220°C fan/240°C/475°F/gas 9. Place the artichokes on a baking tray, then pour over 2½ tablespoons of oil and sprinkle over ¼ teaspoon of salt. Use your hands to coat them in the oil, then bake for 20 minutes, or until soft and a knife slips through them easily.

To make the mint and coriander chutney, put the mint leaves and most of the coriander (keeping a handful of leaves aside) into a blender with 4 tablespoons of oil, 1 green chilli, the lemon juice and ¼ teaspoon of salt. Blend until smooth, then transfer to a small serving bowl. For the tamarind chutney, mix the date syrup, tamarind and chilli powder in another small bowl. Put the yoghurt into a

150g plain yoghurt, non-dairy if vegan
1 red onion, very finely chopped
1 x 400g tin of chickpeas, drained
2cm ginger, peeled and very finely chopped
2–4 tsp chaat masala
a handful of sev (chickpea noodles) or Bombay mix, to serve

third small bowl with 2 pinches of salt and just enough water so that you are able to drizzle it.

Set aside 1 tablespoon of the onion to garnish. Place the artichokes and chickpeas in a bowl and lightly mash using a fork, then add the remaining onion, the ginger and half a green chilli and mix well. Put 2 tablespoons of rapeseed oil into a large non-stick frying pan over a medium heat and, when hot, add the artichoke and chickpea mix. Cook for 10 minutes, stirring just once halfway through, to get some good char on the vegetables. Add 2 teaspoons of chaat masala, taste, and add up to 2 teaspoons more if you like, a little at a time. Mix well and tip on to a serving plate.

Drizzle over some of the mint and coriander chutney, followed by the same amount of tamarind and yoghurt. You won't need all of it – leave some so that people can customize their own bowls. Sprinkle a generous handful of sev over the top, followed by the remaining coriander leaves and onion.

ROASTED JERUSALEM ARTICHOKE AND CHICKPEA CHAAT

CHICKPEA FLOUR CHIPS with chilli sauce

V

The idea for these chickpea fries came to me when experimenting with the innovative Burmese chickpea tofu called 'Shan tofu', which is made by cooking chickpea flour and water, then allowing it to set until hard enough to cut. The result can be sliced into strips and thrown into salads, or fried, a bit like normal tofu.

Serves 4 /

120g chickpea flour (gram flour)
½ tsp ground turmeric
1 1/8 tsp salt
2 tbsp fine polenta
2 tbsp rapeseed oil

For the chilli sauce /
2 tbsp ketchup
2 tbsp sriracha

Line a 20cm square baking dish with greaseproof paper.

In a large saucepan, whisk the flour, turmeric, salt and 200ml of water until smooth. Leave to rest for 5 minutes, then whisk in a further 400ml of water and place the pan over a medium-high heat. Let it come to the boil, whisking continuously as it is prone to sticking. When it boils, and the batter thickens, reduce the heat to low and simmer for 12 minutes – stirring all the while with a wooden spoon so the mixture doesn't stick and burn – until it's very thick and coming away from the bottom of the pan.

Pour the chickpea batter into the lined baking dish, lay a piece of greaseproof paper over the top and smooth it down with your hands – do this fairly quickly as the batter will become hard to work with as it cools. Leave for 10 minutes to cool, then place in the fridge for at least an hour. While it sets,

prepare the sauce by mixing the ketchup and sriracha together.

To cook the chickpea fries, lift the cooled, set batter out of the dish and place on a chopping board. Cut the batter in half, then cut each half into 1.5cm-thick chips. Place the fine polenta on a plate and toss the chips in it until coated. Heat the oil in a large frying pan over a medium-high flame and add the chips in a single layer (you may need to fry the chips in batches, so as not to overcrowd the pan). Fry for 5 minutes, turning halfway through, until they are a lovely golden brown.

Serve the chickpea fries in a delicious pile next to a pool of the chilli sauce.

CHICKPEA FLOUR CHIPS WITH CHILLI SAUCE

AMRITSARI POMEGRANATE CHICKPEAS

V

My trip to Amritsar will always be remembered for one thing: just how cold it was. My mistake wasn't wearing the wrong clothing, it was booking a hotel room with a three-inch gap under the door that let in the sub-zero temperatures. In lieu of central heating, the only way to stay warm was to visit the food-stall dhabas. We would stand by the tandoors, order bottomless chai and fill our bellies with spicy chickpeas.

Two things distinguish this dish, known as 'chole', from other Indian chickpea dishes. It is darker in colour (which comes partly from the spices but mainly from the tea the chickpeas are boiled in), and it has a sour edge, from the pomegranate. Dried pomegranate seeds are used traditionally, but because they can be hard to come by, I use pomegranate molasses instead.

Serves 4 /

- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 1 tsp fennel seeds
- 1 tsp coriander seeds
- 2 x 400g tins of chickpeas, drained
- 2 black teabags
- 3 tbsp rapeseed oil
- 2 red onions, finely chopped
- 1¼ tsp salt

Place a wide-bottomed frying pan over a medium heat. When hot, put the cumin, fennel and coriander seeds into the pan and toast them for 4 minutes, or until almond-skin brown, stirring frequently. Bash using a pestle and mortar until fairly well ground, then leave to one side, keeping the pan for later.

4 cloves of garlic, crushed
1 green finger chilli
200g vine tomatoes, chopped
1 tbsp pomegranate molasses
fresh coriander leaves, to serve

Place the chickpeas in a medium-sized saucepan, add the teabags and a litre of water and simmer for 20 minutes, until the chickpeas are soft and brown. Drain, remove and discard the teabags, and leave the chickpeas to one side.

Put the frying pan back on the heat and, when hot, put the chopped onions and salt into the pan. Cook for around 10 minutes, until soft and sweet, then add the garlic, chilli and ground spices and cook for 3 minutes. Add the chopped tomatoes and cook for a further 10 minutes, until you have a thick, dark paste, then add the pomegranate molasses, chickpeas and 400ml of hand-hot or freshly boiled water. Mash some of the chickpeas with a fork, to help the sauce thicken. Simmer for 10 minutes or so, until the sauce thickens a little more, then take off the heat. Transfer to a bowl and top with the fresh coriander.

MAHAM'S DAL

V

One of the many things I love about the Pakistani ceramicist Maham Anjum is her hands. They move with incredible and well-practised grace on her wheel, moulding large, unfriendly-looking boulders of clay into elegant, perfectly formed bowls and biryani pots. I love her studio too, a rickety wooden shed in the midst of an overgrown garden full of foxgloves, butterflies and a naughty little fox in the summer. I also loved this dal she served when I came to visit, which she introduced simply by saying: 'I just put it all in a pot, Meera, and stir it.'

note / This dal is made with the very quick-cooking 'mung dal', which are the de-husked and split yellow insides of green mung beans. Bags of mung dal can be found in big supermarkets or Asian shops.

Serves 4 /

300g mung dal
250g vine tomatoes (3 medium), chopped
3 fat cloves of garlic, crushed
2.5cm ginger, peeled and grated
½ tsp ground turmeric
1 tsp chilli flakes
3 tbsp rapeseed oil
10 fresh curry leaves
1½ tsp salt
½ tsp black mustard seeds
1 tsp cumin seeds
1 green finger chilli, very finely chopped
a handful of fresh coriander, chopped

Put the mung dal, tomatoes, garlic, ginger, turmeric and chilli flakes into a large saucepan for which you have a lid, with 1 tablespoon of oil, 4 of the curry leaves and 1.25 litres of water. Place on a medium heat, with the lid cocked over the top, bring to the boil, then turn down to a simmer. Cook for 30 to 40 minutes, stirring every now and then, until it's soft and fairly thick, then stir in the salt.

To make the tarka, heat 2 tablespoons of oil in a small frying pan over a medium flame and, when smoking hot, add the mustard and cumin seeds, the chilli and remaining 6 curry leaves. When the leaves crisp up and the seeds crackle, which should take about a minute, take the tarka off the heat and pour into the dal pan. Stir to mix, sprinkle over the coriander and serve with freshly steamed basmati rice.

sides

Growing up, there were no sides; there was no main thing at the centre of the table, no hierarchy between dishes. Instead, there was simply a variety of delicious things to eat: usually a couple of vegetable curries and a dal, a pilau, yoghurt, and a tray of pickles to jazz things up.

This simple arrangement belied a multitude of textures and temperatures: hot chillies against cold yoghurt; sour pickle against soothing dal. Each dish had a role to play.

Sides were something that we ate in restaurants or at friends' houses, the side playing second fiddle to the prized meat at the centre of the table. Today, the rules are changing, both in how restaurants choose to feed us and how we choose to feed ourselves.

The template of starters, mains and sides is being ripped up, and we're freeing ourselves to eat in ways that feel right. Sides are being elevated and appreciated – sometimes even stealing the show. I love this change – and it's why I wanted to dedicate a chapter to these often neglected dishes.

Just treat these recipes as very useful tools in your culinary toolbox, and the world is your oyster (mushroom).

Recipe List

ROAST GREEN BEANS AND TENDERSTEM with sesame sauce

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TAMARIND SHALLOTS

NUTMEG, LIME AND COCONUT GREEN BEANS

BLACKENED SWEETCORN with miso butter

WHOLE ROAST PUMPKIN with black bean and chilli oil

ROAST GREEN BEANS AND TENDERSTEM with sesame sauce

V

My husband and I disagree on how long to cook broccoli. I like it boiled to the point where it submits to the tooth (al dente), but he likes it quite crunchy. The only time we both agree is when it is roasted, as in this recipe. Roasting blackens and blisters the greens, while keeping the insides tender and bright. Although this recipe is a perfectly reasonable portion for 4 people, we can eat the whole thing between the two of us.

This dish is a loose spin on Japanese goma-ae, or greens served with a sesame sauce, where the seeds are ground and mixed with other ingredients, then tossed through the greens. I have cheated here a little by using tahini. This dish goes well with tofu and noodle dishes.

Serves 4 /

For the sauce /

4 tbsp tahini
1 tbsp toasted sesame oil
1½ tbsp light soy sauce
1 tbsp brown rice syrup
1.5cm ginger, peeled and grated

For the greens /

2 tbsp rapeseed oil

Preheat the oven to 200°C fan/220°C/425°F/gas 7.

Place all the ingredients for the sauce in a bowl and mix together, then add a little water to help loosen it up, so you can just about drizzle it.

For the greens, combine the oil and salt together in a tiny bowl, put the broccoli and green beans in a larger bowl, then pour over the oil and salt and mix it in well with your hands. You want to get the oil into the florets so that they don't burn too much.

¼ tsp salt
300g Tenderstem broccoli
300g green beans, topped
1 tbsp black sesame seeds

Put the vegetables on an oven tray and roast for 10 minutes, until charred. Remove to a big plate or platter, drizzle over the sauce, then sprinkle over the black sesame seeds.

ROAST GREEN BEANS AND TENDERSTEM WITH SESAME SAUCE

SICHUAN AUBERGINES

V

There are six territories within China, each with different culinary traditions, but my love for Sichuanese food burns the brightest. This is partly because of how unsubtle, unrestrained and garlicky it is, but also because I love the names of the dishes, which sound as if they're out of a Grimm's fairy tale. These aubergines are usually called 'fish fragrant' – not because they contain any fish, but because they are cooked with the same ingredients used to cook seafood: fermented chilli bean sauce, garlic and ginger, creating layers of wonderful flavours. This dish works well with other Sichuan-style dishes like the mushroom mapo tofu on page 171 and kung pao cauliflower on page 235.

Serves 4 /

- **3 medium aubergines (900g)**
- **2 tbsp rapeseed oil**
- **2cm ginger,** peeled and grated
- **3 cloves of garlic,** grated
- **2 tsp caster sugar**
- **1 tbsp Chinkiang black vinegar**
- **2 tbsp chilli bean sauce** (see page 287)
- **1 tsp cornflour**
- **250ml vegan vegetable stock**
- **salt,** to taste

Trim the aubergines, then quarter them lengthways and cut each piece in half widthways to give roughly 4cm-long pieces. Place these in a bowl, add the oil and mix well to ensure that each piece is well coated.

Put a large non-stick frying pan over a medium-high heat and, when hot, place the aubergines in the pan flesh side down. Don't overcrowd the pan: do this in batches to ensure the aubergines cook in a single layer. Cook each batch for around 6 to 8 minutes, turning them over every 2 minutes, until golden tender and cooked through, then remove to a plate.

4 spring onions, sliced into long, thin strips

In a small bowl, mix together the ginger, garlic, sugar, vinegar, chilli bean sauce and cornflour, then add a few tablespoons of the stock to loosen.

Set the same pan over a medium heat and add the sauce and the remaining stock. Bring to the boil, then turn the heat down to a gentle simmer and cook for around 3 minutes, just long enough for the sauce to thicken and coat the back of a spoon. Return the aubergines to the pan and mix well with the sauce: you want each piece of aubergine to be wearing a silky jacket of the ruby-red sauce. Simmer for another minute, then remove from the heat. Taste and add salt if need be, then transfer to a serving dish and scatter over the spring onions.

SICHUAN AUBERGINES

KUNG PAO CAULIFLOWER

V

Sticky, sweet, hot, and packed with crunchy peanuts, kung pao is a Western remix of a Sichuanese dish called gong bao. This dish goes well with Sichuan aubergines (see page 232) and steamed jasmine rice.

Serves 4 as part of a larger meal /

- **1 large cauliflower or 2 small ones (800g net)**
- **1 tsp Sichuan peppercorns**
- **rapeseed oil**
- **2 tsp cornflour**
- **2½ tbsp light soy sauce**
- **1½ tbsp white wine vinegar**
- **2 tbsp hoisin sauce**
- **1/3 tsp salt**
- **4 spring onions,** very finely chopped, whites and greens separated
- **4 cloves of garlic,** sliced paper thin
- **4 bird's-eye chillies,** slit lengthways
- **2cm ginger,** peeled and sliced into thin batons
- **50g unsalted peanuts**

Preheat the oven to 200°C fan/220°C/425°F/gas 7.

Trim the cauliflower and break down into bite-size florets, around 4cm at the widest part, then place on your largest baking tray in a single layer. The pieces should not overlap (or they'll steam), so use two trays if you need to.

Smash the Sichuan peppercorns with a pestle and mortar until well ground, then add 2 tablespoons of oil to the mortar, mix well and pour over the cauliflower, rubbing the oil and pepper into the florets thoroughly until coated. Place in the oven and roast for 20 minutes, turning the florets over halfway through.

In the meantime, make the sauce. Put the cornflour into a bowl and slowly mix in the soy sauce, ensuring there are no lumps, followed by the vinegar, hoisin sauce and salt. Make sure you have all the other ingredients prepared and within arm's reach, for the next step.

Put 2 tablespoons of oil into a large non-stick frying pan on a high heat. When smoking hot, add the roasted cauliflower and toss for a minute, then add the spring onion whites, the garlic, chillies and ginger. Cook for 3 to 4 minutes, stirring only every minute or so to help char the mixture. Then add the sauce and cook for 3 to 4 minutes, stirring occasionally, until dark, sticky and glossy. Toss through the peanuts, then tip on to a serving plate, sprinkle over the spring onion greens and serve.

KUNG PAO CAULIFLOWER

NEW POTATO SERUNDENG

V

I'm excited to introduce you to serundeng, an Indonesian condiment and a gift to every home cook who is looking to liven up a dish. Affectionately known as 'crispy bits' in the Sodha household, these bits are made by frying coconut, shallots, garlic and tamarind until they give up their very best flavours and become crunchy enough to top salads, rice or, in this case, new potatoes. Although it might look like a lot of salt to boil the potatoes in, they absorb only a little – just enough to be perfectly seasoned.

As this is quite a dry side dish, it's best paired with a dish with sauce, for example the tempeh with pak choi and tomato sambal on page 168, or the nutmeg, lime and coconut green beans on page 245.

Serves 4 /

750g new potatoes, scrubbed if necessary
salt
rapeseed oil
2 large shallots (200g), very finely chopped
3 cloves of garlic, crushed
½ tsp ground cumin
1 tsp ground coriander
2 tsp tamarind paste

Put the potatoes, 1 tablespoon of salt and 1.5 litres of water into a medium-sized saucepan. Set over a high heat, bring to the boil and cook for 15 to 25 minutes (depending on the size of your potatoes), until a knife slides in with no resistance. Drain well, tip back into the pan and put on the lowest heat possible for a couple of minutes, to allow them to dry out a little.

While the potatoes are cooking, make the serundeng. Heat 1½ table-spoons of oil over a high

40g desiccated coconut
60g unsalted peanuts

heat in a frying pan, then add the shallots and garlic and cook for 5 minutes, stirring frequently, until the onions are starting to colour at the edges. Add the cumin, coriander, ½ teaspoon of salt and the tamarind and cook for 2 minutes, then add the coconut and peanuts. Mix well, turn the heat down and cook for another 5 minutes, stirring frequently, until the mixture is brown and crispy.

When the potatoes are cooked, drain and tip them on to a serving platter, drizzle with oil, top with the serundeng and serve.

NEW POTATO SERUNDENG

ROASTED CARROTS AND CABBAGE with gochujang

V

Take your carrots and cabbage to Seoul and back. It's worth the trip.

Serves 4 /

750g carrots, peeled and quartered
750g white cabbage (1 medium), cut into 2cm wedges
1½ tbsp gochujang paste
1 tsp ground cumin
1¼ tsp salt
4 cloves of garlic, crushed
3cm ginger, peeled and grated
rapeseed oil
1 tbsp white wine vinegar

Preheat the oven to 200°C fan/220°C/425°F/gas 7 and line two large oven trays with foil.

Place the carrots in one tray and the cabbage in another. In a small bowl, mix the gochujang, cumin, salt, garlic, ginger and 3 tablespoons of oil. Pour half across each tray of vegetables, and mix with your hands so that the marinade gets everywhere. Make sure the carrots and cabbage are in a single layer, then place the trays in the oven for 35 to 40 minutes, until the vegetables are tender and blackened at the edges.

Meanwhile, put 2 tablespoons of oil and the white wine vinegar into a large bowl. When the carrots and cabbage are roasted, transfer them to the bowl while still hot and toss them in the oil and vinegar. Pile the vegetables on to a large plate and serve.

ROASTED CARROTS AND CABBAGE WITH GOCHUJANG

TANDOORI BROCCOLI

The tandoor has been around for over 5,000 years, but you will struggle to find one in an Indian home as this ancient clay oven remains the reserve of restaurants, cafes and makeshift street-food stalls. In most of the Western world, things are different. Ovens are commonplace and, with the press of a few buttons, we can bring their heat to anything and everything. In this recipe I've given broccoli the classic tandoori marinade makeover and it suits it. The key to this dish is to work the marinade into the florets but not to overdo it. Charring the broccoli will bring out a fantastic contrasting bitter edge to the creamy marinade.

Serves 6 /

rapeseed oil
2 broccoli crowns
240g full fat cream cheese
1 tbsp lemon juice
3 cloves of garlic, crushed
3cm ginger, peeled and grated
1¼ tsp Kashmiri chilli powder
1¼ tsp salt
1 tsp garam masala

Preheat the oven to 200°C fan/220°C/425°F/gas 7, line two baking trays with foil and brush a little oil over the foil.

Turn the broccoli crowns upside down and carefully quarter them lengthways. Mix all the other ingredients together in a bowl and push the mixture into the nooks and crannies of the broccoli florets with your hands, leaving the stems bare.

Put a little oil into the same bowl and, using a pastry brush, brush the stems with the oil. Spread the quarters out across the trays and bake for 20 minutes, or until the stalks are tender and the florets are a burnished red. Transfer to a dish, and serve.

TANDOORI BROCCOLI

TAMARIND SHALLOTS

V

There's much more than meets the eye with the shallot. Roast those pretty petals and you'll find some of the richest, sweetest flavours you'll taste in the natural world. In this recipe, the shallots are roasted with sweet tomatoes and then mixed with tamarind. They're a wonderful side to have with a gentle dish, in particular the Jersey royal and green bean istoo on page 112 (see also the photo there).

Serves 4 /

800g banana shallots
400g vine tomatoes
1 tsp cumin seeds
½ tsp black mustard seeds
5 tbsp rapeseed oil
¾ tsp salt
2 tsp tamarind paste
8 fresh curry leaves
1 green finger chilli

Preheat the oven to 180°C fan/200°C/400°F/gas 6 and line two large baking trays with foil.

Top and tail the shallots, cut them in half lengthways and peel off the skin. Place the shallots on one of the trays, unfurling some of the petals as you go (only enough to fill the baking tray in one layer; you don't want the shallots to sit on top of one another). Halve the tomatoes and place on the other tray.

Using a pestle and mortar, grind together the cumin and mustard seeds until you have a coarse powder. Add the oil and salt, stir, then pour over the shallots and tomatoes and mix with your hands, making sure the vegetables are well coated with the spices and oil.

Bake for 25 minutes, turning the trays around halfway through. Remove from the oven, tip the tomatoes into the shallot tray and add the tamarind,

curry leaves and chilli. Carefully mix using a wooden spoon, then bake for another 5 to 8 minutes, until they're starting to blacken and char in places. Transfer to a bowl to serve.

NUTMEG, LIME AND COCONUT GREEN BEANS

V

This side dish goes well with just about anything, but is particularly good with the new potato serundeng on page 237.

Serves 4 /

2 tbsp rapeseed oil
1 red onion, very finely chopped
3 cloves of garlic, crushed
1.5cm ginger, peeled and finely grated
1 bird's-eye chilli, finely chopped
½ tsp salt
1 tsp sugar
400g fine green beans, topped
200ml coconut cream
1 whole nutmeg (or ¼ tsp ground nutmeg)
1 lime, quartered

Put the oil into a large frying pan for which you have a lid, and place over a medium heat. When hot, add the onion and cook for 6 minutes, stirring frequently, until starting to brown, then add the garlic, ginger and chilli. Cook for 4 minutes, then add the salt and sugar, stir, and add the beans. Pour over the coconut cream and stir again.

Turn the heat down to low and cook for 8 to 10 minutes, or until the coconut cream is driven off (it will turn from milky to clear), leaving a transparent, silky mess of green beans. Take them off the heat, grate over roughly a third of the whole nutmeg (or add the ground nutmeg), then squeeze over a lime quarter, mix and taste – you may like to add a little more lime.

Transfer to a serving platter, slice the remaining lime quarters in two and place alongside for people to each help themselves if they wish.

BLACKENED SWEETCORN with miso butter

I believe miso butter came from the wonderful mind of Momofuku's David Chang. But I can't hold him responsible for this recipe, in which I've used gochujang (see page 288) to bring a little sweet heat to the game and lime to cut everything down to size. You can make the corn as you like: boil it or BBQ it. My personal preference is to cook it over a gas hob on the lowest burner, controlling how it blackens using a pair of tongs.

You can serve this dish as a starter, or alongside other BBQ dishes — or slice off the kernels, mix into the miso butter and serve alongside a rice dish, like the sprout nasi goreng on page 132.

Serves 4 as a starter or side /

4 corn cobs, dehusked
1 lime, cut into wedges

For the miso butter /

2 tbsp unsalted butter
4 tbsp white miso
½ tsp chilli powder
2 tsp gochujang paste
1 spring onion, very finely sliced
salt, to taste

Take the corn out of the fridge 15 minutes before cooking so that it comes up to room temperature.

Strip the corn of any silky strands and turn the smallest burner on a gas hob to the smallest flame. Keep a plate to one side and, using a pair of heatproof tongs, hold the corn over the heat. Cook each cob for 5 to 8 minutes, turning every 30 seconds, until the kernels are a deep yellow or charred black. Place the cooked cobs on the plate and leave until cool enough to handle.

Meanwhile, make the miso butter. Put the butter and miso into a small saucepan with the chilli powder, gochujang if using, and spring onion, and cook

over a low heat until the butter has melted. Stir to mix, and taste for salt – mine needed a pinch; yours might too.

You can slice the kernels off the corn cobs if you prefer, or put the whole cobs on a serving plate. Pour over the hot miso butter, and serve immediately with the lime wedges to squeeze over.

BLACKENED SWEETCORN WITH MISO BUTTER

WHOLE ROAST PUMPKIN with black bean and chilli oil

V

There have been times when, despite the size of my knife, I haven't been able to saw my way into a pumpkin. But my lack of success led me to another idea: roast it whole. I've since done so many times – creating an impossibly creamy, sweet mash, without having to do any mashing.

You may need to go to a Chinese supermarket or look online to find the salted fermented black beans. They are the Asian equivalent of an anchovy or olive, and really worth knowing about. Their natural flavour is incomparable with the sickly-sweet black bean sauces that come in jars and, as an added bonus, a bag of these beans will live almost indefinitely in your cupboard.

Serves 6 /

1.5kg pumpkin, such as Delica, pricked with a fork
2 tbsp rapeseed oil
¼ tsp salt

Preheat the oven to 180°C fan/200°C/400°F/gas 6.

Place the pumpkin in a roasting tin and cook in the oven for 1 to 1½ hours, until very soft and just starting to collapse a little at the belly.

For the black bean and chilli oil /

2 tbsp rapeseed oil
3 cloves of garlic, finely sliced
1 tbsp salted fermented black

While the pumpkin cooks, make your black bean and chilli oil. In a small saucepan, heat 2 tablespoons of rapeseed oil over a low flame for 1 minute. Add the garlic to the oil and fry gently for 1 to 2 minutes, until golden brown and sticky. Remove the pan from the heat to let the oil cool a little and

beans, rinsed
2 tsp chilli flakes
1 tbsp soy sauce
1 tsp caster sugar

carefully add the black beans. Return to the heat and add the chilli flakes, soy sauce, 2 tablespoons of water and the sugar. Cook for a further 30 seconds, stirring constantly, then remove from the heat and allow to cool.

When cool enough to touch, slice the pumpkin in half. Using your hand like a bear's paw, claw out the seeds from the middle of the pumpkin (or scoop out using a spoon) and discard. Scoop out the flesh and place in a bowl with the remaining 2 tablespoons of rapeseed oil and the salt. Beat with a fork until the pumpkin is very smooth, then spread on to a plate. Make a shallow well in the centre, pour in the black bean and chilli oil, and serve.

WHOLE ROAST PUMPKIN WITH BLACK BEAN AND CHILLI OIL

condiments

Most people hang a meal around a main course, but I could start with pickle first. This is where my dopamine hits lie, in the hot, sweet fire of a jar of chilli oil or the salty, pungent cream of kimchi mayonnaise. For me, everything else fades away on the plate when a pickle appears.

There are many recipes for sauces and chutneys woven through this book, all of which can be repurposed and used as you wish (see a reminder of these below). However, in this chapter you'll find some very exciting but easy essentials to perk up any meal.

A reminder of other sauces, chutneys and pickles in the book:

Kimchi mayo (page 22) / Walnut miso (page 25) / Wasabi mayo (page 202) / Miso butter (page 246) / Ponzu sauce (page 49) / Gochujang sauce (page 148) / Okonomiyaki sauce (page 201) / Chilli sauce (page 225) / Sesame sauce (page 230) / Black bean and chilli oil (page 251) / Pea and coconut chutney (page 32) / Cabbage pickle (page 81) / Pickled radishes (page 105) / Pickled cucumber (page 135) / Lemon pickle (page 186)

KECAP MANIS
HOT CASHEW SAUCE
SICHUAN CHILLI OIL
VEGAN MAYONNAISE
CARROT ACHAR
PICKLED GINGER

Recipe List

VEGAN MAYONNAISE

PICKLED GINGER

HOT CASHEW SAUCE

KECAP MANIS

SICHUAN CHILLI OIL

CARROT ACHAR

VEGAN MAYONNAISE

V

If you've ever handled silken tofu and put a gently wobbling square of it in your mouth to see how it melts when probed with the tongue, you could see how it could easily be transformed into a lovely silky mayonnaise. As tofus vary a little in taste, I think a vegan 'mayonnaise' should always have a little extra help, in the form of Dijon mustard, garlic and lemon juice, to get things moving.

note / You'll need a blender for this recipe.

Makes 250g /

250g silken tofu, well drained **/ 1½ tsp lemon juice / 1½ tsp white wine vinegar / ½ tsp salt / ½ tsp Dijon mustard / ½ tsp sugar / ½ a clove of garlic,** finely chopped **/ 4 tbsp rapeseed oil**

This couldn't be simpler. Combine all the ingredients in a blender and blitz for a full minute until you have a smooth, thick and glossy mayonnaise. Check the mayonnaise for seasoning, adjusting the salt and lemon juice as you see fit, and store in the fridge for up to a week.

PICKLED GINGER

V

There is a whole universe of Japanese vegetable pickles known as tsukemono, but one of my favourites is beni shoga: thin strips of ginger traditionally pickled in the pickling liquid for Japanese plums, making it bright pink. It's often found dancing on yaki udon (see my udon noodles with red cabbage and cauliflower, page 88) or okonomiyaki (see page 201). Sadly this one is not bright pink as I didn't want to complicate the recipe – but you could add a little beetroot powder if that's your thing.

Makes 40g /

40g ginger, peeled and cut into tiny batons **/ ¼ tsp salt / 4½ tsp white wine vinegar / 4 tsp caster sugar**

Mix the batons of ginger with the salt in a small bowl and leave to rest for 30 minutes, then squeeze well to remove as much water as possible.

Combine the vinegar, sugar and 1 tablespoon of water in a small pan. Heat over a low flame until the sugar is dissolved, add the squeezed ginger and leave to cool. Transfer to a sterilized container and put it in the fridge, where it will keep for up to a month.

HOT CASHEW SAUCE

V

Forgive me, for I have repurposed a recipe. I originally created this for a Mexican chipotle sauce in the *Guardian*, but I enjoyed it so much that I thought it would be useful to include a variation of it in this book. I've used Kashmiri chilli powder here to create a gently hot sauce which is perfect for sandwiches, salad dressings and most things you could imagine putting a creamy hot sauce over.

Makes 100g /

100g unsalted cashews / 1 clove of garlic / 2 tbsp rapeseed oil / ½ tsp salt / 1 tsp Kashmiri chilli powder

Place the cashews in a saucepan and cover with 300ml of water. Bring to the boil, then turn the heat to low and simmer for 10 minutes. Peel the garlic clove, throw it into the pan, turn off the heat and leave to cool.

When cool, put the contents of the pan into a blender with the oil, salt and chilli powder, and blitz to a smooth sauce. Scrape into a bottle, jug or bowl, and store in the fridge for up to a week.

KECAP MANIS

V

Most recipes suggest making a simple syrup out of soy and sugar, but I found that by the time I had boiled it down it was unbearably salty. My recipe requires just mixing brown rice syrup with soy. I've used dark soy because it has a much deeper molasses flavour, which light soy does not have. Scale up as you need.

Makes just over 1 tbsp /

1 tbsp brown rice syrup /
1 tsp dark soy sauce

Place the two sauces into a small bowl and mix.

SICHUAN CHILLI OIL

V

Sichuan chilli oil is a beautiful chorus of garlic, chilli, spices and sesame. These few ingredients, gently infused in oil in a matter of minutes, provide a jar of gentle fire ready to throw into dishes from congee to ramen, noodles to plain rice.

You can buy chilli oils from large supermarkets and Chinese shops that are really delicious, but this home-made version easily measures up to them. It's quick, uses predominantly store-cupboard ingredients, and will make you feel wonderfully accomplished.

note / You'll need a blender for this recipe.

Makes 200ml /

1 tbsp Sichuan peppercorns / 200ml rapeseed oil / 1 tsp ground cumin / 1 bird's-eye chilli, finely chopped **/ 2 cloves of garlic,** crushed or grated **/ 2 tbsp chilli flakes /** ¼ **tsp salt /** ¾ **tsp caster sugar / 1 tbsp toasted sesame oil /**1½ **tsp light soy sauce**

Grind the Sichuan peppercorns using a pestle and mortar, until you have a rough powder. Put the ground Sichuan peppercorns into a small saucepan and add all the other ingredients except the sesame oil and the soy sauce. Place over a very low heat and leave the ingredients to get to know one another for 5 minutes. Towards the end of the time it should be gently sizzling.

Remove the pan from the heat and allow to cool for 5 minutes. Add the sesame oil and soy sauce and stir well to combine, then allow to cool fully. The oil will keep in an airtight jar in the fridge for around a month.

CARROT ACHAR

V

A great little pickle is worthy of a spot in your fridge. It will perk up curries, dals, rice and sandwiches no end. An all-carrot version of this is good for some colour-blocking on the table, but it also works with green beans, turnip, kohlrabi – and, I daresay, other vegetables too.

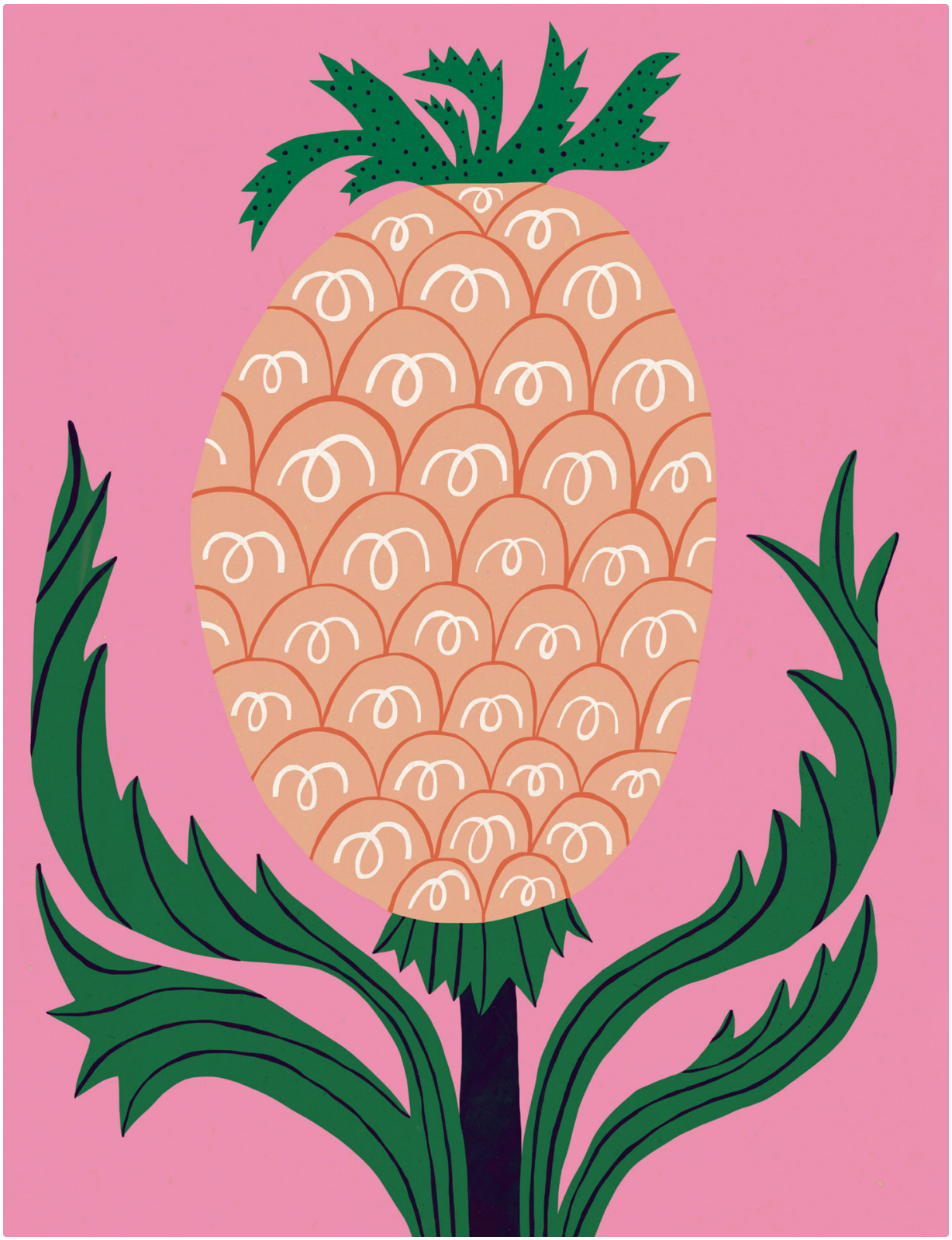
Makes a large jar (around 450g) /

- **1 tsp coriander seeds**
- **1 tsp cumin seeds**
- **1 tsp black mustard seeds**
- **2.5cm ginger,** peeled and roughly chopped
- **4 cloves of garlic,** roughly chopped
- **2 green finger chillies,** roughly chopped
- **80ml rapeseed oil**
- **10 fresh curry leaves**
- **a pinch of fenugreek seeds**
- **500g carrots,** peeled and cut into slim 4cm batons
- **1 tsp ground turmeric**
- **1½ tsp salt**
- **½ tsp caster sugar**
- **4 tbsp white wine vinegar**

Grind the coriander, cumin and mustard seeds using a pestle and mortar until you have a coarse powder. Scoop out of the mortar and set aside. Use the pestle and mortar to bash the ginger, garlic, chillies and 2 tablespoons of water until you have a rough paste.

Heat the oil in a large frying pan for which you have a lid, and add the curry leaves. When they crackle and turn emerald green, add the crushed seeds and the fenugreek seeds. Stir for 2 minutes, then add the garlic, ginger and chilli paste. Cook for 5 minutes until the oil starts to separate from the paste, stirring regularly so that it doesn't catch, then add the carrots, turmeric, salt, sugar and vinegar. Put the lid on and cook for 10 minutes, or until the carrots are tender. Remove the lid and cook for another 5 minutes, being careful that the spices don't burn.

Taste and adjust the seasoning as you see fit – you may like to add a little more salt, sugar or vinegar – then take off the heat. When cooled, transfer to a clean jar and pop into the fridge. Eat within a couple of weeks.



sweet

So much of our culinary pleasure comes from having food just the way we like it.

For years, I didn't like Indian sweets. I learned to duck and swerve Indian aunties at every festival, wedding and birthday, their hands poised at mouth level ready to launch a small barfi, cham cham or piece of sandesh into my mouth. For my hybrid palate, with half my taste buds in England and the other in India, the sugar felt brash, the flavours heavy-handed and the textures too dense.

This hasn't resulted in a blanket ban, and there are a couple of traditional Indian desserts in this chapter: a heavenly stove-top rice pudding made with basmati rice; and a sweet strained yoghurt called 'shrikhand' that's so creamy and thick you could stand a spoon up in it.

What I really love, however – much like the Victorians did – is the liberal use of spice in puddings. Just as sugar and spice can transform tea into a steamy magical chai, spices can really make a pudding jump from the 'quite nice' category into something to desire with an unholy passion.

Also, as you will see in this chapter, there is quite a bit of fruit and a little chocolate. This is because, no matter which world cuisine you happen to be eating, fruit and chocolate are a universally excellent way to finish a meal. So here are a few favourites – from all over.

Recipe List

SUNKEN GINGER PLUM AND SPELT CAKE

PINEAPPLE LOVE CAKE

SAFFRON, ALMOND AND LEMON CAKES

VIETNAMESE COFFEE ICE CREAM

CARDAMOM KHEER

STEM GINGER CHOCOLATE TRUFFLES

BANANA BREAD with toasted coconut

SALTED MISO BROWNIES

MILLI'S MATCHA ROLL CAKE with raspberries and cream

DORAYAKI PANCAKES with blueberry cream

BANANA TARTE TATIN with cinnamon, black pepper and cloves

ROSE STRAWBERRIES with strained saffron yoghurt

SUNKEN GINGER PLUM AND SPELT CAKE

V

Ginger and plum are a fine pair of ingredients, often found lounging around together in a Chinese sauce. Although they are both able to carry a cake by themselves, when combined they make for a boldly flavoured, jammy, pudding-like cake. I've used spelt instead of the aptly named plain flour, because it boasts a nutty flavour and better credentials in the nutrient department, but you could use plain if you can't find spelt.

note / The apple puree adds moisture to compensate for the lack of eggs, but for a non-vegan version use 2 medium eggs in place of the milled flaxseeds and almond milk, and soft unsalted butter instead of the sunflower spread. This can be eaten hot or cold, though it's best warm, with a little yoghurt, ice cream or cream (dairy-free, if you are vegan).

Serves 8 /

2 tbsp milled flaxseeds
6 tbsp unsweetened almond milk
120g sunflower spread
80g dark brown soft sugar, plus extra for sprinkling
80g apple puree
½ tsp vanilla extract
100g white spelt flour
60g ground almonds
1 tsp baking powder

Preheat the oven to 180°C fan/200°C/400°F/gas 6 and line a 20cm cake tin with greaseproof paper. Mix the flaxseeds and almond milk in a small bowl.

Put the sunflower spread, sugar, apple puree and vanilla in a large bowl and vigorously mix with a hand whisk – it will look a little split, but that's OK. With a wooden spoon, fold in the spelt flour, almonds, baking powder, bicarb, ginger and salt, until just combined. Now add the flaxseed mixture,

½ tsp bicarbonate of soda
4 tsp ground ginger
a pinch of salt
7 small firm plums (about 350g), halved and stoned

fold once more to combine, then pour into the prepared tin.

Top the batter with the plum halves, cut side up, overlapping them slightly as you go, then sprinkle over about a tablespoon of sugar. Bake for 40 minutes, turning the tin halfway through, until the top of the cake is firm to the touch, golden brown and a skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean. Leave to cool in the tin for a few minutes, then remove from the tin and serve warm.

SUNKEN GINGER PLUM AND SPELT CAKE

PINEAPPLE LOVE CAKE

V

When I was growing up, our oven was used to store exiled chopping boards and frying pans. As a result, any cake that merited the annual clearing of the Sodha oven had to be incredibly special. One day, I found it: the mighty Sri Lankan love cake, whose origin dates back to the fifteenth century, when the Portuguese ruled Ceylon. It's everything I love: dense, floral, and full of nuts and spices. This particular pineapple variation evolved when I cooked with Richard Blackwell, then head chef at the Dock Kitchen. It's a cake worth clearing out the oven for.

note / This is a vegan cake, but for a non-vegan version use 4 medium eggs in place of the flaxseeds and almond milk, and soft unsalted butter instead of the sunflower spread.

Serves 8 /

- 125g sunflower spread, plus extra for greasing
- 4 tbsp milled flaxseeds
- 180ml unsweetened almond milk
- 1 small pineapple, peeled
- zest and juice of 1 orange (you should get 60ml of juice)
- 260g light brown Muscovado sugar

Preheat the oven to 180°C fan/200°C/400°F/gas 6. Grease the base and sides of a 23cm cake tin with sunflower spread and line the base with greaseproof paper, making sure it comes at least 3cm up the sides of the tin (so the juices don't leak). Mix the flaxseeds and almond milk in a small bowl.

Lie the pineapple on its side, cut 8 round 0.5cm-thick slices off the bottom and put into a saucepan. Add the orange juice and 60g of the sugar, bring the mixture up to the boil, then turn off the heat and set aside.

1 tsp rose water extract or 2 tbsp rose water
1 tsp vanilla extract
zest of 1 lemon
100g ground almonds
150g fine semolina
1½ tsp cinnamon
¼ tsp nutmeg
1 tsp ground cardamom
1 tsp baking powder

In a bowl, use a spatula to cream the sunflower spread and the remaining sugar in a large bowl, then mix in the rose water, vanilla extract, lemon and orange zest. In a second bowl, whisk together the dry ingredients — the almonds, semolina, cinnamon, nutmeg, cardamom and baking powder. Add the flaxseed mixture to the creamed butter and sugar, then fold in the dry ingredients until just combined.

Layer the pineapple slices, one over another, in the base of the tin to form an interlocking circle with no hole in the middle, then pour the pan juices over the top. Spoon the cake batter into the tin over the pineapple, and use the back of a spoon to level it out. Bake for 45 minutes, or until a skewer comes out clean, then remove from the oven and leave to cool in the tin for 20 minutes. To turn out the cake, run a knife around the sides, put a plate on top of the tin and turn over. Voila! Serve with non-dairy yoghurt.

PINEAPPLE LOVE CAKE

SAFFRON, ALMOND AND LEMON CAKES

Some recipes are born out of a creative vision I have in the middle of the night, but these cakes came about because I had some egg whites to use up. I added some of my favourite sweet ingredients – saffron, almonds and lemon – and out of the ashes the phoenix rose.

Makes 8 mini cakes /

For the cakes /

140g unsalted butter
20 strands of saffron, plus a few more to decorate
120g ground almonds
75g plain flour
120g caster sugar
a pinch of salt
4 egg whites
zest and juice of 1 lemon

For the frosting /

60g icing sugar
60g unsalted butter, softened
120g full fat cream cheese

Preheat the oven to 180°C fan/200°C/400°F/gas 6 and line a 12-hole muffin tin with eight paper cases.

Melt the butter in a small saucepan, then crumble the saffron between your fingers and add it to the butter to infuse. Put the almonds, flour, sugar and salt into a mixing bowl and whisk together. Add the egg whites and beat well, then add the butter and saffron mixture, half the lemon zest and half the juice, mixing as you go. Spoon the batter into the cases, and bake for 15 minutes or until the cakes are golden and a skewer comes out clean. Remove from the oven and leave to cool completely.

To make the cream cheese frosting, beat the sugar with the butter until smooth, then fold in the cream cheese and the rest of the lemon zest and juice until just mixed. When the cakes are cool, spoon over the frosting. Use a palette knife to smooth it around the top of each cake into a gentle cone, then, for a touch of glamour, place a single strand of saffron on top of each one.

VIETNAMESE COFFEE ICE CREAM

Vietnamese coffee is strong, sweet, and made with condensed milk, which gives it a rich, velvety smoothness. It made complete sense to transform it into a delicious post-dinner ice cream. As Mum makes her coffee ice cream using condensed milk and freezes it without churning (Indian women have always been so artful with tins of evaporated and condensed milk), I asked her for some advice. She said, 'I got the recipe from Aunty Savi, beda [darling]. She got it from a friend of hers, who said she saw Nigella make it on the television.' So with thanks (and apologies) to Nigella, here is my recipe for Vietnamese coffee ice cream, adapted from Mum's recipe, which is adapted from Aunty Savi, who got it from her friend, who originally got it from Nigella.

note / You'll need a deep, airtight 1-litre container for the ice cream.

Makes 1 litre /

- 4 tbsp instant espresso coffee granules, plus ½ tsp to decorate
- 300ml single cream
- 1 x 397ml tin of condensed milk
- 300ml double cream

First make up the coffee. Place the coffee granules in a large heatproof bowl and pour over 4 tablespoons of boiled water. Stir to dissolve the granules, then pour in the single cream and condensed milk and mix well.

In another large bowl, whip the double cream into soft peaks, so that when you lift the whisk, the cream does not fall back into the bowl. Slowly pour the coffee mixture into the whipped cream, stirring as you go, until completely combined.

Pour into your litre container, sprinkle with a few coffee granules and pop into the freezer for at least 4 hours, until hard. Take the ice cream out of the freezer 5 minutes before you want to eat it. It scoops beautifully but melts very quickly, so pop the tub back into the freezer as soon as you've finished serving.

CARDAMOM KHEER

I take a bite of this sweet rice pudding and I am back at my parents' house at Diwali. They've just been dancing. Arya is eighteen months old, playing with the dancing stick and shrieking with laughter. One more spoonful, and she's six months old and just learning to eat; she doesn't wrinkle her nose at a simple kheer made with apples. A couple more spoonfuls and it's 2015, I'm in Bademiya in Mumbai, it's 2 a.m. and Hugh's just arrived. I've been away from him for weeks again, travelling to research recipes for *Fresh India*. I missed him so much I could barely eat, but now he's here and the kheer tastes like sweet celebration. Another spoonful and I'm six again, struggling to fit in at a new school. I don't tell Mum, but perhaps she knows because there's kheer for pudding and it tastes like home.

Serves 4 /

100g basmati rice
1 tsp ground cardamom
½ tsp ground cinnamon
90g caster sugar, plus 1 tbsp to decorate

Place the rice, spices, sugar, milk and cream in a large saucepan and set over a medium-low heat. Bring to the boil – but watch it doesn't boil over – then turn the heat down to a whisper and cook for about 30 minutes, stirring fairly frequently to make sure the rice doesn't stick and burn. If the mixture is getting too dry, add more milk, a little at a time.

700ml whole milk, plus extra if needed
150ml double cream
20g unsalted pistachios
1½ tbsp dried edible flowers (such as marigolds, roses, lavender)

When the rice is nearly done, it will start to bubble and burp more furiously and will need more attention from you. When the rice is tender (i.e. there's no chalkiness in the centre), take it off the heat and spoon into a serving bowl. Allow to cool, then cover and chill in the fridge until cold.

Just before serving, grind the remaining tablespoon of sugar, the pistachios and edible flowers as finely as you can, using a mortar and pestle or electric spice grinder. Sprinkle over the top, and serve.

CARDAMOM KHEER

STEM GINGER CHOCOLATE TRUFFLES

V

Every person knows their particular weakness. It could be a new pair of trainers for some, a pint of Guinness for others or the twopenny slot machines and a bag of doughnuts at the beach for my grandma. But for me, stem ginger enrobed in dark chocolate is an offer I cannot refuse.

Given my disposition, these are frustratingly simple to make. There is no need to set up a double boiler to melt the chocolate: simply chop it up and pour the other ingredients over it. Just remember to take it out of the fridge at least 10 minutes before serving to soften up a little.

Makes 25 /

- 300g vegan dark chocolate (70%)
- 65g flavourless coconut oil
- 80g almond butter
- 4 tbsp stem ginger syrup
- 65g stem ginger, chopped
- 60g crystallized ginger, roughly chopped

Line a 22cm square tin with greaseproof paper. Roughly chop the chocolate into bite-size pieces and put it into a large heatproof bowl.

Place the coconut oil, almond butter, stem ginger syrup and chopped stem ginger in a small pan over a low heat. When everything has melted (the almond butter may stay clumped up, but don't worry about this), pour it over the chocolate and stir with a fork to mix, breaking up any lumps of butter.

Pour the chocolate mixture into the prepared tin, gently shake to distribute evenly, and sprinkle over the crystallized ginger. Leave somewhere cool to set – or pop into the fridge, but take out 10 minutes

before serving so it softens slightly. Cut into 25 squares when set.

STEM GINGER CHOCOLATE TRUFFLES

BANANA BREAD with toasted coconut

V

While other cakes come and go with seasons and flights of fancy, the banana cake is steady – it's the safe bet and the crowd-pleaser, and also my secret favourite. Not all banana cakes are created equal, however. This one is so dense, you could bite into a slice with your lips and it would remember them like memory foam. It's sweet, but not so sweet that it can't be eaten for breakfast with a choice spread (peanut butter) and jam. But it's still sweet enough to be eaten on its own, all year round and for ever.

note / You'll need a 1lb/450g loaf tin and a food processor to make this. It needs to be left to rest in the tin until cool before slicing.

Serves 8 /

100g coconut oil, plus extra for greasing
100ml maple syrup
1 tsp vanilla extract
150g plain flour
100g ground almonds
150g desiccated coconut
2 tsp baking powder
1½ tsp ground cinnamon
1 tsp ground nutmeg

Preheat the oven to 180°C fan/200°C/400°F/gas 6. Grease your loaf tin with coconut oil, then line the base with a long strip of baking paper (this will make it easier to lift out the cake later).

In a small pan, heat the coconut oil until just melted, then take it off the heat, stir in the maple syrup and vanilla, and set aside. In a bowl, whisk together the flour, almonds, desiccated coconut, baking powder, cinnamon and nutmeg.

450g ripe banana flesh (**from 3–4 large bananas),** cut into chunks

40g raw (untoasted) coconut chips

Put the banana into a food processor and blitz to a smooth puree. Add the flour mixture and oil to the banana, and process again until just combined. Scrape down the sides of the processor and pulse once more. Scrape the mixture into the tin and spread it out evenly. Sprinkle with enough coconut flakes to cover the top completely, then press them lightly into the batter. Bake for an hour, then turn down the heat to 160°C fan/180°C/350°F/gas 4, turn the cake around and bake for a further 20 minutes.

Take out of the oven and leave to cool completely in the tin. Brush off any scorched coconut flakes, cut into generous slices and serve.

BANANA BREAD WITH TOASTED COCONUT

SALTED MISO BROWNIES

VO

If I were in charge of brownies and their taxonomy (which, sadly, I'm not), there would be a proper list of categories. The only thing that unifies them really is the chocolate, beyond which they can be cakey, crumbly, chewy or cocoa-ey (and many other things beyond those beginning with the letter 'c').

This one is my perfect brownie: dense and fudgy thanks to the chia seeds; rich, but not sickeningly so; with a salted caramel-like flavour that comes from using white miso and salt together. It makes this brownie incredibly special. And there is no category for that.

note / Use dark chocolate suitable for vegans if vegan.

Makes 16 brownies /

- 5 tbsp milled chia seeds
- 150g flavourless coconut oil
- 250g dark chocolate (70%), broken into small pieces
- 350g light brown Muscovado sugar
- 120g plain flour
- 3 tbsp white miso
- ¾ tsp flaky sea salt

Preheat the oven to 180°C fan/200°C/400°F/gas 6 and line a 20cm cake tin with greaseproof paper. In a small bowl, mix the milled chia seeds with 270ml of water and set aside.

Place the coconut oil and broken chocolate in a medium-sized saucepan and set over a low heat. Stir occasionally until melted, then take off the heat. Mix in the sugar, flour and miso, and crumble in the salt flakes. Finally, add the bloomed chia seeds and mix. Pour into the lined tin and gently shake to distribute the mixture.

Place on the middle shelf of the oven for 45 minutes, then remove. The brownies might be wobbly in the middle, but they will soon settle down and become deliciously fudgy. Leave to cool completely, then cut into 16 squares.

SALTED MISO BROWNIES

MILLI'S MATCHA ROLL CAKE with raspberries and cream

Milli Taylor's grandma was Japanese. I assumed that she must have acquired her fantastic matcha baking skills from her, but sadly not. When her grandmother came to the UK in 1954, she didn't know any other Japanese people and as neither her husband nor her friends would contemplate eating bean curd, or seaweed, she had no option but to cook English food. Milli is now one of the best caterers in London. She might not have inherited her grandmother's recipes but she did inherit her Japanese love for perfection, and I count myself lucky to have borrowed this wonderful recipe.

note / You'll need a Swiss roll tin (a shallow tin with a small lip) as close in size to 25cm x 35cm as you can find. If your tin is a little smaller, it will still work but your swirl might not be quite as satisfying. You'll also need an electric hand mixer.

Serves 9–10 /

100g plain flour
2 tbsp matcha powder
1 tsp baking powder
a pinch of salt
4 large, fridge-cold eggs
120g caster sugar
150g raspberry jam
200ml double cream
20g icing sugar

Preheat the oven to 180°C fan/200°C/400°F/gas 6. Line your Swiss roll tin with non-stick baking paper, folding it tightly into the corners so the paper comes up the sides of the tray by 2cm.

Sift together the flour, matcha, baking powder and salt. Separate the whites of the eggs from the yolks into two large clean bowls, and add the caster sugar to the yolks. Using an electric hand mixer, whisk the

100g fresh raspberries

egg whites until they form stiff peaks. Without cleaning the whisk, move on to the next bowl and whisk the yolks and caster sugar together for a couple of minutes until they double in volume, then stir the matcha flour mixture into the egg yolk bowl.

Using a large spatula, fold the egg whites into the yolks, being careful not to knock out too much air. Pour the batter into the lined tin and use a spatula to level the top. Tap the tray to release any air bubbles, then bake for 12 minutes, or until the sponge springs back to the touch.

Take the cake out of the oven and leave to rest for exactly 1 minute, then place a sheet of baking paper over the top of the cake, followed by a large chopping board. Using oven gloves, turn the cake over and gently remove the tray. Carefully peel off the now top piece of baking paper and replace with a new sheet just slightly larger than the cake. Gently turn the cake back over again and pop it back into the tin.

Take a sharp knife and, at one of the short ends of the cake, score a mark 2cm in, all the way along the width of the cake. Tuck that end of parchment over that edge of the cake and begin to loosely roll the sponge from one short end to the other, rolling the baking parchment with it. Transfer your roll to a cooling rack with the seam on the bottom. Loosely cover with a clean tea towel and leave to cool for 30 minutes.

When the cake is cool, carefully unroll it and spread the jam over the sponge, right to the edges. Whisk the double cream and the icing sugar together until you have soft peaks, then, leaving a 2cm border all around the sides, spread the cream on top of the jam so it is 1cm thick. Scatter over the raspberries

and gently press them into the cream. Lifting the parchment at the scored cut end, roll the sponge back up again fairly tightly (but without squeezing out the cream). With the seam on the bottom, place on a tray and transfer to the fridge for a couple of hours to set.

When you're ready to serve the cake, remove from the fridge and, with a sharp knife, cut the roll into 9 to 10 even slices. This cake will keep in the fridge for two days, but it is best eaten on the day you make it.

MILLI'S MATCHA ROLL CAKE WITH RASPBERRIES AND CREAM

DORAYAKI PANCAKES with blueberry cream

The Portuguese have introduced a love of baking into many countries. In Sri Lanka there is the love cake; in Goa, India, the layered bebinca; and in Japan, the castella. Castella cake – a type of honey sponge – was brought over in the sixteenth century by Portuguese merchants to Nagasaki, where it is still a speciality today. It was adapted into the dorayaki: two soft, cake-like pancakes, sandwiched together with a filling in the middle. Here I've used a thick, cold, blueberry cream as the filling, but if you don't have time to make the cream, mix a couple of tablespoons of your favourite jam into mascarpone instead.

note / The pancakes can brown quite easily, but there's ample batter here for you to test a couple of pancakes first for heat and size. Cook's perk.

Makes 6 sandwiches (12 pancakes) /

For the blueberry cream /

250g blueberries
1½ tsp lemon juice
4¼ tbsp caster sugar
250g mascarpone cheese

For the pancakes /

150g plain flour

First make the blueberry cream. Place the blueberries in a small saucepan and mash lightly with a potato masher. Add a tablespoon of water, the lemon juice and sugar, and place over a low heat. Cook for around 10 minutes, stirring regularly, until very sticky and all the moisture has evaporated. When you run a spoon across the bottom of the pan, there should be no liquid running from one side to the other. Transfer to a heatproof bowl to cool for 10 minutes, then combine with the mascarpone and place in the fridge.

¾ tsp baking powder
75g caster sugar
2 eggs
1 tbsp runny honey
100ml whole milk
rapeseed oil

To make the pancakes, mix all the dry ingredients together in a bowl. In a jug, mix the eggs, honey and milk together, then pour into the dry ingredients. Stir well until there are no lumps in the batter. Place a non-stick frying pan over a medium heat, wipe a little oil around the pan with kitchen paper and, when hot, drop 2 tablespoons of batter into the pan. Cook for 2 minutes, until the surface of the pancake has a lot of bubbles and the edges are dry, then flip over and cook for 30 seconds to a minute more. Transfer to a plate, and repeat until you have 12 pancakes.

To assemble the dorayaki, spread some blueberry cream on one pancake and place another pancake on top and lightly press down. Use the back of a spoon or a knife to smooth the edges of the cream if you wish, then press down the sides to seal, and serve.

DORAYAKI PANCAKES WITH BLUEBERRY CREAM

BANANA TARTE TATIN with cinnamon, black pepper and cloves

VO

The tarte tatin is a design classic. Here I have adapted it using bananas and a small amount of cinnamon, black pepper and cloves. The key to turning out the tarte tatin is to be prepared: before you put it in the oven, choose a plate to turn it out on to which is larger than your pan – and don't compromise on the oven glove-wear.

note / You'll need a 28cm ovenproof frying pan or tatin tin for this recipe.

Serves 4 /

150g light brown Muscovado sugar
½ tsp ground cinnamon
a pinch of cloves
1/8 tsp finely ground black pepper
5 small to medium bananas, peeled and cut in half lengthways
plain flour, for dusting
320g puff pastry (dairy-free if you're vegan)

Preheat the oven to 180°C fan/200°C/400°F/gas 6 and keep your ovenproof frying pan or tatin tin within reach.

Place the Muscovado sugar in a small saucepan and add 2 tablespoons of water. Mix with your fingertips and pat into a single layer. Place the saucepan over a high heat and allow the sugar to bubble and dissolve for around 3 minutes, then remove from the heat and add the cinnamon, cloves and pepper. Stir, then pour into your ovenproof frying pan or tatin tin.

Place the halved bananas closely together in the frying pan or tin, cut side down, to make a fan shape. Fill any gaps with more cut banana if need be. Flour your work surface, then roll out the puff

pastry until it's just bigger than the top of the pan (around 32cm) and the thickness of a 2p coin. Drape the pastry over your rolling pin, carefully lay it over the pan, and gently tuck down the edges around the bananas, making sure there are no gaps. Prick the pastry all over with a fork (to ensure the steam escapes and the pastry will crisp) and place in the oven for 30 minutes, or until golden brown.

Make sure you're wearing padded oven gloves on both hands when you remove the tarte tatin from the oven, as the caramel will be volcano hot. You need to turn the tarte tatin out immediately, so take extra care. Once it's out of the oven, place a large plate (larger than the size of the pan) over the top of the pan and gently turn it over, shaking gently, then remove the pan carefully.

Serve still warm. It goes very well with a little creme fraiche or yoghurt sweetened with icing sugar and brightened with a little lime juice.

BANANA TARTE TATIN WITH CINNAMON, BLACK PEPPER AND CLOVES

ROSE STRAWBERRIES with strained saffron yoghurt

The riper and sweeter the strawberries you buy, the better this simple and elegant dish will taste, but given that those strawberries would be lovely on their own, perhaps here you should use those that haven't quite managed to reach their full potential. Both components (strawberries and strained yoghurt) can be made in advance, leaving you to pull off some effortless-looking hosting if people are coming around for dinner. My only word of advice is to determine whether you have rose water, or rose essence or extract made using alcohol. If you have the latter, add it drop by drop and into a spoon first, so you don't accidentally pour the whole thing in (like I once did).

note / You'll need to start this the morning ahead of lunch, or at lunch for dinner. You'll also need a muslin or clean tea towel and sieve to make the strained yoghurt.

Serves 4 /

For the strained saffron yoghurt /

1kg Greek yoghurt
12 strands of saffron
¾ tsp ground cardamom or ground seeds of 4–5 pods
6 tbsp (70g) icing sugar

To make the strained saffron yoghurt, line a sieve with a muslin or tea towel, place over a deep bowl and pour in the yoghurt. Scoop up all four corners of the muslin, tie them together and place the sieve and the bowl in the fridge for at least 4 hours. When it's done, the yoghurt should be fairly stiff with at least a few tablespoons of liquid in the bottom of the bowl. How much you end up with will depend on the type of yoghurt and how much whey

For the strawberries

/

400g strawberries, leaves removed, quartered

4 tbsp (50g) icing sugar

1 tsp rose water (if an extract like Nielsen-Massey, use scant ¼ tsp)

1 tbsp lemon juice

there is in it, but you should have around 550g; if you have a lot more, pop the extra in the fridge for later.

When you're happy with the texture of the strained yoghurt, place the saffron in a small bowl with 1 teaspoon of freshly boiled water and leave to soften for a minute. Add the saffron and its water, the cardamom and sugar to the strained yoghurt and mix well.

To marinate the strawberries, place them in a bowl with the sugar, rose water and lemon juice. Gently stir, and pop into the fridge for at least an hour.

To serve, divide the yoghurt between four shallow bowls, then spoon over the strawberries and some of their juice.

ROSE STRAWBERRIES WITH STRAINED SAFFRON YOGHURT

helpful things

INGREDIENTS

Bird's-eye chillies

Once bitten, never forgotten. These tiny red chillies, sometimes called 'Thai chillies', send a lightning bolt of heat through anything they touch. Their heat is often tempered in Thai and Vietnamese dishes with salt, sugar, vinegar and/or coconut milk. They are widely available in supermarkets and can be frozen whole if you don't manage to get through a whole packet.

Chilli bean sauce (toban djan)

Made using fermented broad beans and chillies, which give the resulting dish a good level of heat and funk. This is a critical ingredient in mapo tofu (see page 171). Lee Kum Kee, a popular brand, is sold in larger supermarkets and online.

Chinkiang vinegar

This sharp black vinegar is brewed from glutinous rice and is the perfect antidote to anything rich, as it slices through it like a freshly sharpened knife. It's used in dipping sauces and is available in most Chinese supermarkets. If you can't find it, a cheap, sharp balsamic is a good substitute and, failing that, white wine vinegar – but it won't have the same edge.

Choi sum

This leggy green vegetable has a long juicy stem and large tender leaves. You can shred the leaves, cut the stalk and cook them both together. It's less bulbous than pak choi, and is available all year round.

Coconut milk

Coconut milk varies so much. In my opinion, the best in class are the Thai brands Chaokoh and Aroy-D, because they contain over 50 per cent extracted coconut, they have few or no preservatives and they don't tend to split as much as some other brands.

Galangal

Like ginger, galangal is a rhizome, but unlike ginger, it tastes citrusy and pine-y. It can be found in Chinese supermarkets, but galangal paste is more widely available in big supermarkets. I use the paste in the massaman curry on page 114 and the Thai green curry on page 120 without detriment to the recipes.

Gochujang

This Korean red pepper paste is a spicy, sticky and sweet condiment of joy. It's often made using chillies, glutinous rice, fermented soy beans and sugar. I love it in Korean bibimbap (see page 148), kimchi fried rice (see page 136) or just slathered over vegetables and roasted, as in my roasted carrots and cabbage (see page 238). It has a long shelf life and is found in Chinese or Korean supermarkets.

Green finger chillies

These are the standard-issue chillies in India. Slim and green, their heat is bright, fresh and not ear-ticklingly hot, so they're sometimes used in addition to Kashmiri chilli powder. Available in some major supermarkets and in Asian supermarkets.

Hoisin sauce

The darling of the Chinese sauce world, this sauce is built to please anyone and anything it touches. Made using fermented soybeans, garlic, sesame, sugar and spice, it can be bought in most supermarkets.

Kaffir lime leaves

These glossy leaves add a citrus-floral meets tropical-forest fragrance to dishes. They can be bought fresh in certain supermarkets, frozen in Asian supermarkets – but if you can't find either fresh or frozen, then dried are available in most large supermarkets. Crush them to release their oils, leave them to infuse into dishes and fish them out just before serving.

Kashmiri chilli powder

This is my favourite chilli powder because it's mild-mannered and colourful. A little will give a rounded gentle warmth to a dish. Add it by the ½ teaspoon until your dish tastes just right to you. Kashmiri chilli powder is widely available; my preferred brand is Fudco, which is available online.

Kecap manis

An Indonesian condiment, often called 'sweet soy'. It's made using fermented soybeans but it's thicker, sweeter and more syrupy than soy sauce. You can buy it in bigger supermarkets or online, or make something similar at home (see page 256).

Kimchi

This is Korea's gift to the world: hot salted and fermented vegetables, predominantly cabbage, but often carrot, daikon, ginger and garlic. It can be bought in sealed vac packs or in jars in larger supermarkets or online. The jarred kimchi is often fresher with a richer, more developed flavour but you will need to 'burp' it every now and again by loosening the lid to release some of the pressure build-up.

Kombu

A type of thick, flat seaweed cultivated in the northern waters of Japan and Korea. Steeped in hot water, it makes for a delicious umami-rich stock. It's available in Chinese supermarkets and online.

Mirin

This sweet rice wine is used in Japanese cooking, and is not to be confused with rice vinegar. It gives dishes sweetness primarily, but also depth of flavour, and is often used to balance the saltiness of soy sauce.

Pak choi

This is a type of Chinese cabbage, and with its tender green leaves and juicy white bulb it's unlike any of our English cabbages. Most people halve them, but I like to shred them lengthways to get a little leaf and juice in each bite. They can be boiled, fried or steamed in a matter of minutes and are available widely in our supermarkets.

Salted fermented black beans

These tiny little black beans are like olives or anchovies in the intensity of their salt and umami. They're used as they are in mapo tofu (see page 171), or to make black bean paste. Both the Zheng Feng and Silver Swan brands can be found in most Chinese supermarkets in a red bag under the name 'salted black beans'.

Sichuan peppercorns

This very special and unusual pepper smells of grapefruit, and though it isn't very hot it will make your tongue tingle and numb it gently and briefly.

Soy sauce

The two types of soy sauce most widely used are light and dark. Light is clean, crisp, thin and salty: perfect to add unami-rich flavours and salt to dishes — this is the type I use most widely, to allow other flavours to shine

through. Dark soy is thicker and richer, with a molasses-like flavour. Tamari can be used as a substitute for either.

Sriracha

A wonderful hot sauce of Thai origin in which heat, sweetness and salt are balanced in equal measure. I like to drizzle this over my eggs in the morning, but it can be used as a secret weapon to add punch to many dishes. Available widely in supermarkets.

Thai basil

Also known as Thai 'sweet basil', this Thai herb has made it into many of our supermarkets. It tastes sweet and aniseedy and is often added to curries and stir-fries towards the end of cooking so that its fragrance isn't destroyed by heat. It's quite delicate and won't last long, so keep it in the fridge and use it as soon as you can.

Toasted sesame oil

Toasted sesame oil is not generally used for cooking with heat, as its flavour deteriorates on contact: it's much better used as a seasoning. It's widely available in most supermarkets.

Temple
BRAND
SINCE
1938
豆豉
頂上
Fermented
SALTED BLACK BEANS

ACME
NUT GRATER
Pat. 11-4-71

ONLINE SUPPLIERS

General

For Indian, Sri Lankan, Burmese and South East Asian ingredients

The broadest church is www.theasiancookshop.co.uk.
For a smaller, general, high-quality selection and excellent service www.souschef.co.uk.

For Chinese, Thai, Korean, Japanese, Malaysian ingredients

www.orientalmart.co.uk.

Specialists

Indian specialists

A giant version of my mother's store cupboard but also great for fresh Indian produce like curry leaves, green chillies and mangoes, as well as spices, flours and oils: www.redrickshaw.com.

Chinese specialists

Wing Yip have been trading for over 40 years in the UK – if they don't have it, no one else will: www.wingyipstore.co.uk.

Japanese specialists

For hard-to-find ingredients like pickled shoga, own-brand miso, premium tofu and and bento sets: www.japancentre.com/en.

Korean specialists

Get your kimchi, gochujang and K-Pop from one shop: www.hmart.co.uk.

Spice specialists
For high quality, organic and fair-trade: www.steenbergs.co.uk.

CLASSIC INDIAN COOKERY
My Great India Cookbook VIKAS KHANNA
SECRETS FROM MY INDIAN FAMILY KITCHEN Anjali Pathak
Reza's INDIAN SPICE
Complete INDIAN Cookbook
INDIA FOOD & COOKING
complete indian cooking
MADHUR JAFFREY'S ULTIMATE CURRY BIBLE
Hidden Kitchens of Sri Lanka
FOOD of the GRAND TRUNK ROAD
Madhur Jaffrey Curry Easy
Madhur Jaffrey Curry Easy Vegetarian
SRI LANKA: THE COOKBOOK
Sri Lankan Flavours
KRICKET
RICE & CURRY Sri Lankan Home Cooking
MADHUR JAFFREY'S FLAVOURS OF INDIA
Betty Crocker's INDIAN HOME COOKING
THE INDIAN COOKERY COURSE
the indian kitchen
Indian In Six
I ♥ CURRY Anjum Anand
Indian Every Day
ETHIOPIA
THE VIET KITCHEN
BOTTOM of the POT
FIVE MORSELS of love
RECIPES FROM AN INDIAN KITCHEN
BURMA • SUPERSTAR
A.WONG THE COOKBOOK Andrew Wong
FRESH INDIA MEERA SODHA
INDONESIAN FOOD SRI OWEN
SIMPLE THAI FOOD
POWER VEGETABLES!
Sri Lanka
101 Easy Asian Recipes
PRASHAD Cooking with Indian Masters
Vegan STREET FOOD
PRASHAD
india's vegetarian cooking
LAND of FISH and RICE
ROSA'S THAI CAFE THE COOKBOOK
#CookForSYRIA RECIPE BOOK
BANGKOK
MADHUR JAFFREY'S INDIAN COOKERY
Madhur Jaffrey • An Invitation to Indian Cooking
The JUHU BEACH CLUB Cookbook
india & pakistan
EVERY GRAIN of RICE
How I cook SKYE GYNGELL
Cooking of the Maharajas
MY KITCHEN
CHEZ PANISSE CAFÉ COOKBOOK
WELIGAMA EMILY DOBBS
THE SPORTSMAN
PARIS PICNIC CLUB
CASA MORO
MORO EAST
MORITO Sam & Sam Clark
PITT CUE CO. THE COOKBOOK
McGEE on FOOD & COOKING HAROLD McGEE
RAILROAD
FIRST, CATCH
Two Kitchens Rachel Roddy
the natural baker Henrietta Inman
GJELINA
MY PANTRY • ALICE WATERS
Honey & Co.
DIANA HENRY
HOW TO EAT a PEACH
Vegetarian
STIR CRAZ
OTTOLENGHI SIMP
NOPI
JERUSALEM
MALAYSIA
THE JAPANESE
THE FOOD OF VIETNAM
THE SONGS OF SAP
KOREA
SPICE TRI
CHAI, CHAAT &
INDIAN FOOD
A HISTORICAL COMPANION
Finding Fire
RICK STEIN'S INDIA
HOT SOUR SALTY SWEET
MY ASIAN KITCHEN • JENNIFER JOYCE
THOMAS
time GILL MELLER
An Invitation to Indian Cooking MADHUR JAFFREY
THE BIG BOOK OF CURRIES
SPICE AT HOME VIVEK SINGH
Atul's CURRIES of the WORLD ATUL KOCHHAR
rasoi: new indian kitchen vineet bhatia
CINNAMON KITCHEN
THE CINNAMON CLUB COOKBOOK
CAPITAL SPICE
Café Spice Namaste Cyrus Todiwala
Savour Mumbai VIKAS KHANNA
Vegetables ANTONIO CARLUCCIO
Chloe FLAVOR
RAW CAKE
Celia Brooks SUPERVEG
the HAPPY PEAR STEPHEN & DAVID FLYNN
Darina Allen's BALLYMALOE COOKERY COURSE
Katzen MOOSEWOOD COOKBOOK
World Food Café
Nigel Slater Real Food
Honey & Co.
My New Roots
THE JEWELLED TABLE
Plant
The Cuisines of
trullo

FURTHER READING

These food writers and books have all helped me to add new ingredients, techniques and, in some cases, cuisines to my kitchen:

Alford, Jeffrey, and Naomi Duguid, *Hot Sour Salty Sweet* (Artisan, 2000)

Anderson, Tim, *Nanban* (Square Peg, 2015); and *JapanEasy* (Hardie Grant Books, 2017)

Bourke, Jordan, and Pyo, Rejina, *Our Korean Kitchen* (W&N, 2015)

Chang, David, and Meehan, Peter, *Momofuku* (Absolute Press, 2010)

Duguid, Naomi, *Burma* (Artisan, 2012)

Dunlop, Fuchsia, *Sichuan Cookery* (Penguin, 2003); *Shark's Fin and Sichuan Pepper: A sweet-sour memoir of eating in China* (Ebury Press, 2011); *Every Grain of Rice: Simple Chinese Home Cooking* (Bloomsbury, 2012)

Ford, Eleanor, *Fire Islands: Recipes from Indonesia* (Murdoch Books, May 2019)

Hachisu, Nancy Singleton, *Japanese Farm Food* (Andrews McMeel Publishing, 2012)

Jaffrey, Madhur, *Eastern Vegetarian Cooking* (Arrow, 1990); *A Taste of the Far East* (BBC Books, 1993); *Ultimate Curry Bible* (Ebury Press, 2003)

Kuruvita, Peter, *Serendip: My Sri Lankan Kitchen* (Murdoch Books, 2009)

Meehan, Peter, *Lucky Peach Presents 101 Easy Asian Recipes* (Clarkson Potter, 2015)

Owen, Sri, *Indonesian Food* (Pavilion Books, 2015)

Solomon, Charmaine, *The Complete Asian Cookbook* (Hardie Grant Books, 2011)

Thompson, David, *Thai Food* (Pavilion Books, 2002)

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